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ABSTRACT

The safest means of transportation in the United States is the school bus fleet. Each school day, over 350,000 school buses transport about 22,000,000 children ages 3 to 21--from wheelchair pupils to varsity football players--to and from school in weather conditions ranging from those for Fairbanks, Alaska, to those typical of Cave Creek, Arizona. Many school systems ignore their pupil transportation administrator, yet this individual often manages a great many people, controls a large budget, and handles some of the most sensitive issues of the school system. This book, containing 13 chapters, was written to call attention to the value and importance of the school bus transportation services. The chapters cover: (1) the challenge for pupil transportation; (2) transportation administration and management; (3) communications; (4) alternative fuels; (5) labor and contractor relations; (6) the bus driver; (7) routing and scheduling; (8) the role of the computer; (9) the transportation budget; and (10) inclement weather. The appendix contains 20 transportation job descriptions from the role of the director of transportation to the duties required of tire specialists. (KM)

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# PUPIL TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT

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# PUPIL

# TRANSPORTATION

# MANAGEMENT

ANTHONY R. MILLER

Ramsburg and Roth Publishers
Thousand Oaks, California

**Pupil Transportation Management**

Published by
Ramsburg and Roth Publishers
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# FOREWORD

Pupil transportation is one of the country's greatest service industries and hardly anyone knows it. Each school day over 350,000 school buses transport about 22,000,000 boys and girls to school, and then turn around and take them home in the afternoon, a "window of opportunity" of four to five hours. The average citizen thinks about a major airline, which claims to transport 100,000 passengers each day--in 24 hours! On a routine school day, 350,000 bus drivers and aides work with children, ages 3 to 21, from wheelchair pupils to varsity football players, and from weather conditions ranging from Fairbanks, Alaska to Cave Creek, Arizona. And the public pays little attention to them.

The safest means of transportation in the United States is the school bus fleet. Parents whose youngsters ride the buses typically overlook the fact that a school bus is statistically far safer than the car they're driving. But no one pays much attention to it.

The administrator of a bus fleet depends on employees whose job takes them out of his sight and communication. Their work is driving a bus in the community, not working in an office or factory. Would you believe that the public thinks of these managers as supervisors who have their people in the plant?

Many school systems ignore their pupil transportation administrator. Ask superintendents and board members on whom they depend, and a majority will answer, "The

transportation director." Look for his/her name in the administrative staff directory. It's not even listed. Yet, they often manage a great many people, control a large budget, and handle the most sensitive issues of the school system.

There are several reasons for this ignorance. Education must be the focus of a school system. After all, the chief reason we have school systems is the education of our youth, and their learning environment must get top priority. For too long, however, many have ignored the service side of the schools. There can't be an efficient system if the rooms aren't heated and if the buses don't run safely and on time. The most visible supporting service is transportation. The program which provides the most support, and by default can cause the greatest disruption, is transportation.

It is my desire that this book will help bring the value and importance of the school bus profession into its real place in our daily lives.

**Thought for the Day: A little inspiration and a lot of perspiration combine to make success.**

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CHAPTER 1

# THE CHALLENGE FOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

A basic thread of our society is public education. Our country recognizes it, supports it, and calls upon it to train our youth to meet the successorship of the next generation. The community calls for academic change to adjust to the high tech changes which the United States is embracing, and public education is rapidly changing to do so. Yet one thing in the school system doesn't change – transportation. Children must be provided safe and efficient school bus service – no curriculum can succeed without it. A compromise in bus service causes a compromise in the academic environment. While standing in the center of the interchange of curricula, technology, and performing arts, one must remember one constant – school buses keep transporting boys and girls.

This constant doesn't ignore innovation. There are challenges, today as well as in the future. If we ignore them, we're lost. And so will be the safest and most dependable form of transportation in the country.

There are several challenges the administrator faces:

People – the management of personnel is a daily job, constant, yet ever-changing. A good administrator is a good leader. The abilities and successes of men and women are virtually unlimited, and so are the frustrations and inconsistencies they can produce. Empathic, inspirational leadership generates the former, while autocracy and insensitivity lead to the latter. No person is an island,

and no one is indispensable. Administrators must surround themselves with competent people and constantly lead them.

The prophet syndrome is a significant block to progress. What is the prophet syndrome? "A man is never a prophet in his own back yard." The transportation administrator is too frequently overlooked by the public and relegated to second-class citizenship.

Cost consciousness poses a delicate balancing act for the transportation administrator. Several states have adopted balanced budget laws. Many school districts have been stripped of their ability to raise local funds, and national tax reform places a greater burden on state tax programs. Furthermore, the senior citizen population continues to increase, and a frequent response of retirement communities is a reluctance to approve tax increases for school budgets. These factors, coupled with the public scrutiny of academic achievements, reduce available funds, and the service side of the equation usually takes first hit. The successful administrator must be cost effective while maintaining a high level of service with a decreasing supply of resources.

Microcomputers. "Work smarter, not longer" epitomizes the reliance on technology the administrator must adopt. Machines will not replace people, and the computer cannot be substituted for an administrator's judgment. But data can be processed faster, and more information can be analyzed easier. School closings and attendance area redistricting depend on population projections, and the need to frequently and readily address all the variables in this sensitive area should be handled with computer assistance.

Seat belts – compartmentalization – pedestrians. Seat belt use in conventional school buses is emotional and sensitive. The issue is also clouded by invalid information and faulty communication. The trend has been one of cyclic participation. Every four to six years, a new group of concerned parents and agencies, genuinely anxious, raise the issue, followed by several years of relative inactivity.

Rear facing seats are a potential safety improvement waiting for comprehensive testing and research. Vehicle structural integrity continues to progress. Seat cushions and padding, frame attachment, and bus body compartmentalization have measurably improved.

Pedestrian safety and bus stop safety pose great challenges. More children are killed walking to and waiting at bus stops than are fatally injured on buses. Greater focus is being directed to these problems, and it must be continued.

There are two principal professional organizations, The National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) and the National School Transportation Association (NSTA). NAPT is made up chiefly of public school administrators, while NSTA is composed of private contractors. Both are outstanding organizations and speak for the industry and their constituents. Each organization represents major points of view, but have many common goals and interests. Both groups are in their relative infancy, and both are growing in size and maturity. Their voices in local, state, and national groups have been evident, but the industry needs to sell itself on a positive basis to the public. Parents and school administrators have to be fully and constantly informed on the benefits the school bus profession provides, always in truth, and never in vanity. Fur-

thermore, the thrust must be directed at law makers as well.

Unfortunately, the squeaking wheel has not always been greased. City transit lobbies have been successful for years in obtaining subsidies, and the public perceives mass transit as the air, rail, and intercity bus lines. Now is the time for the school bus industry to bring itself to the attention of the public. It is the safest mode of mass transit, but people don't realize the daily transportation of 22,000,000 children each day to and from school is mass transit! NSTA and NAPT must work together and sell the industry.

So challenges there are, and the school bus profession must continue its initiative in overcoming them. The time to speak out is now. One of the characteristics of the industry is the pride of its excellent service, and the general reliance on actions, not words. Fine, to a point, but there comes a time when good deeds must be brought into the open for everyone to see. After all, one doesn't put a bushel basket over a lamp.

**Thought for the Day: Even the richest soil, if not cultivated, produces only weeds.**

CHAPTER 2

# ADMINISTRATION

The focus of this chapter is on the administrative structure of the department. The appropriate delegation of responsibilities and the development of an efficient organization are paramount to a viable program. One cannot gain consistent success without having a well-planned and capable organization. There are several vital components that are of critical importance:

1. Competent personnel
2. A clearly understood organizational structure
3. Delegation of responsibility and authority
4. Recognition of performance

This chapter addresses itself to many components, but will focus on the four primary ones.

It was once said, "if you think people aren't important, just give your most expensive tools to your worst workers," and this characterizes pupil transportation. There are few industries and efforts in this country that are so dependent upon people. Men and women must safely drive the buses, trainers must train them, and managers must lead them. Politics, bond issues, parental complaints, and simple expediency require the transportation director to make judgments which are subject to constant scrutiny. Yesterday's decision bears little weight on tomorrow's new puzzle. All of which negates a technical climate and requires personnel who are "people" oriented.

## COMPETENT PERSONNEL

Of all the important factors that studies reveal, competent personnel clearly ranks at the top. This is a people business. While vehicles are important, it's the successful carrying out of responsibilities that makes an operation safe, efficient, and effective. This depends on the people in the organization.

The first criterion an administrator must consider in the selection of personnel is the open and honest evaluation of candidates. All job opportunities must be advertised and be available to all candidates. There is no way that a top flight administrator can operate in secrecy and in a manner that doesn't permit openness for everyone.

Secondly, the administrator must conduct a selection process that's understood by everyone, and use job descriptions that are clear to all candidates. Furthermore, the process must consider the individual's potential, as well as visible and expressed talents.

No organization can be handled by one person. No system can be creative, flexible, and able to meet youngsters' needs in pupil transportation by resting on the shoulders of one individual. It depends on many, many people, and as a result, the administrator's primary goal in the selection process is to pick good ones.

An administrator's function is to create and maintain a warm and open climate in which subordinates can bear their responsibilities and perform without having the boss look over their shoulders at all times. Successful managers have lieutenants who can carry out the duties with a minimum of supervision and let the manager manage. Administrators have different duties than those

of their assistants, and they must be able to work on them. People simply can't be in two different places at the same time.

What should an administrator look for when he is seeking additional personnel? What characteristics should an administrator envision in candidates? After all, these candidates ultimately will be the ones on whom the administrator depends.

Now, characteristics are just that. They are symbolic of successful men and women, but it is not to be interpreted that all people are strong in all the following items. These characteristics are traits and abilities that an administrator looks for in interviews, qualities that he strives to maintain, and to teach his personnel in the future. Here are the characteristics:

1. Human Relations. The emphasis on supervisory people being cognizant of their employees and the consciousness of human relations is most important.

2. Communications. Misunderstandings must be kept at a minimum. Most misunderstandings come as a result of the lack of communication and/or faulty communications. A manager must look for someone who is capable of expressing himself clearly, honestly, and directly.

3. Empathy. The ability to generate empathy for the other person is very important to good management and good administration. The ability to put oneself in the other person's shoes is necessary for good leadership.

4. Public Relations Sense. Here again, they can't be skilled in all things, and an administrator cannot be expected to be a public relations agent, but his awareness of the impact of pupil transportation demands a good public

relations sense. Every judgment, every decision, and in many cases, every statement, has great impact on the community. Children, teachers, school boards, the lay community—all are affected by pupil transportation. The interaction of all these groups and people sometimes leads to misunderstandings about the administrative decisions that have to be made for the good of all parties. So one must be very conscious of public relations and its role.

5. Systematic Approach To Problem Solving. This is a strong characteristic of successful management personnel. Remember, there are no standard answers for every problem. Every situation generates different solutions. The days of shooting from the hip have passed; good management cannot afford this inefficiency. A manager must look for one's ability, even though it might not be fully matured, to systematically approach problems and work for their resolution. Intuition is fine, and feelings and hunches cannot be discounted, but they are merely parts of one's systematic outlook. Decisions cannot and should not be based solely on hunch. One must be capable of exploring and investigating all avenues and possibilities in a planned, systematic manner.

6. The Ability To Understand And Analyze New Data. Times are ever changing, and it is important to be able to generate new information, as opposed to maintaining a status quo situation.

7. The Ability to Make Decisions. After all, an administrator is a decision-maker. An administrator cannot be a philosopher. An administrator, especially a pupil transportation administrator, is dealing in everyday situations, most of which demand decisions. The ability to make a decision and carry it through is terribly important. The inability to make a decision is the downfall of many individuals, and subsequently, many programs. All people

are human, which means that not all decisions are perfect, and not all decisions stand the test of time. None of us is clairvoyant so decisions have to be made based on the current data. A manager must, after he has systematically conducted an investigation, carefully analyzed the data, and has come to a conclusion about the available facts, and carry it through to a decision.

Beware. A decision does not have to be cataclysmic. A decision might be the judgment to do nothing and leave the status quo. That is a decision. (No community likes indecision. No audience likes evasiveness and wavering.) So a decision must be carried through with no thought of wondering if it's going to turn out right or wrong.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The second component is the organizational structure of the department. Every system varies. The needs of each district and each operation change. Not only do they change within themselves, but they change from coast to coast and in different areas of this country. So by no means is there a perfect schematic structure which will fit everyone's needs. On the other hand, an administrator must stay current with the organization and be in a position to analyze it with such frequency that as local needs change, the organization can adjust and shift to meet those needs.

From an administrative standpoint, the most important goal that a director must meet is the understanding of the current structure by the staff. Throughout all organizations, one of their greatest problems is the lack of understanding of the chain of command.

Different people have different ways of establishing a structure, most of which are excellent. Here again, what's

good in one area may not be practical in another, but that's not what we are discussing. The important thing is to maintain an organizational chart which is current, which addresses itself to the local needs, and above all, is understood by all those in the organization.

One way an administrator meets these accomplishments is to keep everybody involved and permit all staff members to make suggestions and operate in an open climate. A second is to permit the subordinates to have input on:

1. Understanding the changing needs
2. Adjusting to those changes

It is frustrating to employees when they can't be heard and when the manager behind the desk doesn't recognize the changes that are taking place out on the streets. The people who work for the administrator are the ones who are out in the field and deserve the opportunity to be part of the changes.

## RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

Component number three is the delegation of responsibility and authority. Competent, successful people, regardless of the field, share several characteristics. They all have initiative. They accept and carry out responsibility. They are creative, i.e. they don't wait for a situation to become a problem, but study potential problems and prevent them from becoming a major crisis. Furthermore, they try out new approaches in areas that no one has touched. Those are important characteristics. It is the administrator's role to be sure that they fully understand the parameters under which they can work. Communication and clarity, once again, are most important.

With that goes the administrator's function of clearly delegating authority. The administrator must establish with staff members their roles and the demands that the administrator shares with them (because the demands might come from the school board or the community). The administrator must support them as they carry out their job. With the ability to carry out the job goes the need to have the appropriate authority.

A pitfall for an administrator can take one of two avenues. People can be given too much authority and then violate the policies of the school board. Overstepping authority can create a conflict, inadvertent though it might be, between the administrator and subordinate. So one pitfall to watch for from an administrative standpoint is the granting of too much authority.

One hundred eighty degrees in the opposite direction lies a second potential trap, and that's the denial of any authority at all to a subordinate. Once again, the job is too big for one person. A viable, energetic, and constantly moving transportation program simply cannot be successful when everything is at the desk of one person. An administrator must tread a careful line and make sound judgments on the granting of authority. One can't give too much, but can't give too little, either.

## RECOGNITION OF PERFORMANCE

The fourth component is the recognition of performance, an extremely important aspect of leadership. The recognition of performance must, without fail, include two areas:

1. The acknowledgment of good performances (employees earn praise when they have performed above the standards the administrator has established).

2. The recognition of a performance which does not measure up to the administrator's standard.

These are important for several reasons. One of the traits of our society is the failure of people (unfortunately, many in supervisory and administrative roles) to acknowledge the positive side of performance. Far too often managers only pick out the failures and mistakes and think that that's leadership. It is not. Leadership includes both the strong and the weak, the good and the bad, and the positive and negative. An outstanding manager, a supervisor, and a trainer all possess similar characteristics. They share the ability to recognize the positive actions of a subordinate; the willingness to share the successful accomplishments; and the willingness to give credit where credit is due. Many employees fail to perform adequately simply because they feel they work in a negative environment. And this generally occurs when their leader stresses only the negative, and believes his role is to point out the inadequacies that people have, and never acknowledge their assets.

Most people learn in a positive climate. The reinforcement of successful accomplishments is an established path to success. As people learn, they achieve more, so an administrator must never fail to recognize their good performances. All employees need attention and recognition. They need a pat on the back, just as they deserve a reprimand. The administrator must always treat people fairly and do unto others as he wants done unto himself. So fairness and recognition are very important administrative functions for the director.

**Thought for the Day: It's impossible for us to criticize the work of others if we haven't distinguished ourselves by our performances.**

CHAPTER 3

# MANAGEMENT

Management is complex. It involves people, so it is challenging, frustrating, fun, difficult, rewarding, and dissatisfying. The typical administrator must deal with finance, accounting, personnel, human relations, routing and scheduling, maintenance, and safety. And these must be considered within uncertain economic situations, school board politics, and legal and ethical demands.

Since there are many different situations, and each requires a different management approach, it's best for managers to rely on patience and composure. Effective executives are generally those who are in control of their own choices.

By keeping an open range of options, always using fairness, and looking for a better way, an administrator will be a successful leader. That's what good management is.

## MANAGEMENT – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

The first and most important step in management is to develop a realistic appreciation of the talents and abilities of the men and women to whom you delegate authority. Unless you do this, none of the other techniques will be of much value.

Successful managers ask:

1. What are their strengths?
2. What are their weaknesses?
3. What type of leadership do they best respond to?

Next in importance is the principle of retaining accountability. You must stay on top of the job. You don't mastermind it, but you don't give it away either. Some good ways of doing this, singly or in combination, are the following:

1. Develop a plan of work and a schedule of the main activities.

2. Talk the job over with your subordinates before you ask them to go ahead.

3. Have an agreement with them about what problems they report to you. Don't let them nickle and dime you.

4. Be in the action enough to have a firsthand "feel" of what is going on.

5. Require progress reports from your subordinates.

6. Schedule conferences to discuss a project and its status.

7. When the subordinate must work with people in other departments, arrange for the handling of disputes or other problems that may arise.

8. Finally, if things go wrong, don't delegate the unpleasant job of explaining to employees why they must be dismissed, retired, or not promoted. Do it yourself.

## MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

Good decision making is far more than an intellectual exercise. It's an art. It's dependent on human behavior and many conflicts of feeling, in both the executives and their associates. Mental ability, therefore, is only part of the boss's needs. They also must have a lot of courage if

they are to become good decision makers, and also make full use of hunches and common sense. "Average people have five senses, successful ones have two more—horse and common."

Beyond these very basic requirements, there are a number of everyday steps and precautions that will help executives carry out their decisions:

1. Watch the "little" decisions. They have a habit of turning into big ones.

2. If possible, talk over your feelings and judgments with friends on a regular basis.

3. In analyzing problems, try to find the answer that will help the organization, not the answer that will help you personally.

4. Test different alternatives (including ones you don't like) against the facts and figures on hand before reaching a final conclusion. Don't decide on the apparent answer too quickly.

5. To develop a better "feel" for management problems, pick two or three problems and study them. Mastering a few situations will sharpen your sixth sense for other ones.

6. When the situation is really complicated and sensitive, try to allow a little extra time for making up your mind. It's surprising how often unexpected difficulties complicate your schedule.

7. At the beginning of a new job, be patient before making changes.

**Thought for the Day: Good management consists of showing average people how to do the work of superior people.**

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD MANAGER

Good management is dealing effectively with subordinates, bosses, and the public. It requires planning, creativity, and implementing directives. You need a broad vision, as well as a recognition of details. And it's hard, hard work. It's not just an inherited gift. It's a discipline. It can be taught, and it can be learned. An effective manager's success lies in his or her commitment to staying on top of the fundamentals, or at least trying to. And these fundamentals never change, can be learned, and must be practiced.

Be patient and sympathetic to others.

Be a good listener. Give the assistants time. Let them come to you with trust and confidence that they have your full and undivided attention. A boss who fidgets and is preoccupied will dim the creative light and enthusiasm of employees. No one stands alone, all good leaders need their employees. The more inspiration they create, the greater the innovations. But these innovations only develop in an open, listening, action mode. No one is imaginative when they're not listened to. Companies rated as "excellent" by Peters and Waterman all believed in, and practiced, basic fundamental precepts. They treated employees with dignity, and as the real source of productivity and inspiration. They didn't consider machines as the primary source of production. They knew their workers were their principal assets.

Praise the employees when it's due. Thank them when

they've earned it. Make sure you don't overlook the real contributions of an employee. One of the traps managers fall into is the one-way street – they are quick to criticize, but slow to praise. B. F. Skinner studied behavioral patterns, and concluded from numerous data that reward (praise) is a stronger and far more desirable motivator than punishment (criticism). Making people feel guilty through punishment might deter them from repeating something, but inspiring them through praise develops greater performance.

Patience and praise help workers learn from their mistakes, criticism and guilt never do. Emery Air Freight increased the productivity of its warehousing groups through a program in which the employees set their own standards, and when they met and exceeded them, they were praised and rewarded. Incidently, the positive recognition included efforts, as well as accomplishments. In truth, employees can be guided and molded by a positive, inspirational manager. So concentrate on the positive!

Another bad practice is the ignoring of an employee. More staff morale is defeated by management apathy and indifference than by any other factor. The manager's failure to say hello is often never forgotten by an employee.

Say what you mean. George Bernard Shaw remarked that "the greatest problem of communication is the illusion that it has been accomplished." Top managers must constantly be on guard that their memos, discussions, and letters are understood. At best, two people hear only two different things, and the manager must always work hard to eliminate misunderstandings. An administrator's knowledge is usually greater than a subordinate's knowledge (that's often why he's the boss), so the ideas have to be translated so they are understood.

A lot of misunderstanding can be avoided by a clear explanation. Why something must be done, or what a project involves, can be explained so that an employee can understand the larger picture. Furthermore, the manager is treating the worker with dignity, and this cooperation will lead to greater understanding. It will also motivate the employee to be more creative in the future.

Discussion must be a two-way street. You have to work diligently to be clear to your staff, and work just as laboriously to be a patient listener. After explaining the logic and the whys, let the workers ask questions, explain their "other side," and even come up with some better alternatives. Outstanding leaders are those who don't focus on their own favorite theories, but who encourage everyone's best ideas – and translate them into outstanding performance.

Respect the time of others. Sincere, dedicated employees value their moments, and shouldn't be forced to endure long, needless meetings and conferences, especially when no productive action results. One of the world's most respected speechmakers observed, "A speech should be so short that when it's over, you can still remember the beginning." Likewise for meetings. A successful manager calls a meeting only when it's necessary, and when it is, it should be productive, stick to the case in point, and end as soon as the point is addressed. Imagination is degraded by long, stifling meetings. Plan your work and work your plan.

Build flexibility into your planning by prioritizing. Top managers establish primary objectives and secondary aims and know which ones to set aside according to urgency. They don't waste time on minor details if their efforts are

needed on larger matters. They know where to spend their time and attention.

A good meeting is an open one. Staff and employees should talk and listen to each other (not only in meetings, though). They must be confident enough to disagree with each other, and with the boss as well.

Openness is another two-way street. Good leaders never shoot the messenger. On the contrary, they create and maintain a climate of freedom which permits workers to present bad news and problems without fear. And without fear, their colleagues will try to help resolve the problem—with ultimate success, since the success of the workers becomes the success of the managers. An aboveboard manager conducts aboveboard meetings which lead to ventures and adventures, some of which succeed and some of which fail, but "nothing ventured, nothing gained." No person or organization is right every time. Ted Williams is one of baseball's greatest hitters, but his .406 batting average in 1941 means he failed to get on base six out of every ten tries.

Do what you do best. One of the eight points that characterized excellent, innovative companies is "stick to the knitting." Work hard on the basics because fundamentals never change.

Repeat: Management is a discipline which can be learned, and it can be taught. It's common sense, empathy with others, and service. Management is challenging, frustrating, and rewarding.

Successful management is not a method. It's the spirit in which it's done. Success ultimately depends on you, the chief administrator, and your relationship with the em-

ployees. That's what management is all about. Nothing more, nothing less.

**Thought for the Day: The higher a man gets on the executive ladder, the more he's judged by his success in directing other people.**

## TIME MANAGEMENT

Have you ever stopped to think of the number one frustration of every school bus administrator, manager, and executive? Or thought about the frustration of the end-of-day feeling that "you haven't gotten a thing done?" If you can answer yes to these two questions, you're in the upper 50 percent of the management ranks of the United States. Because at least you've managed your time enough to stop and think, and that's the first step towards the enjoyment of your work days.

During every second of your day someone needs you. How long and how frequently they erode your time is generally up to you. If you don't manage your own time, who will? (Naturally, there will be calls from the Superintendent; need one say more?) But you can manage the time to compensate for emergencies, and that management is up to you.

There are many, many variables in your work. Every job has unforeseen and outside influences which affect your schedules, none more acutely than in pupil transportation. The transportation director of every operation can be characterized as a "doer," one on whom everyone makes demands.

Demands there are: unreported field trips, "paper" at-

tendance areas which ignore railroad grade crossings, and special education class assignments which vary with each child. So, the demands and variables are there, and always will be, because it's the nature of the profession. In essence then, it becomes even more critical for transportation administrators to use their time wisely.

Treat time as you do your own money. There is only so much of it to go around, and poor managers are always running out of it. Successful ones plan their schedule and budget it according to their priorities, just as they do with their family finances. An hour they save can be used for one of their priorities, with special results. There's never enough time when it's poorly managed, but there's plenty of it for those who use it prudently.

Treat time as an investment. A wise investment produces financial dividends. So will time well spent. A triumphant manager trains people, delegates responsibilities to them, and then has more time to be even more productive.

In our society of constant change, time is one of life's few absolutes – you can't slow it down, nor can you speed it up. So you must use it effectively, and how efficiently you use it is determined by one person – YOU!

Every person has a different style, fortunately, and every job situation is different. What is an irritant to one person might be soothing to another, so even though there are various impositions, there are many ways all of us can efficiently use our time. Some days one thing might monopolize all your waking moments; on other days several will. Try them, use them, and remember what a man once said, "different strokes for different folks!" Just keep what is comfortable for you and use it wisely.

A colloquial expression commonly used these days is "the bottom line." As you set your personal goals and values, the "bottom line" of the manager's day is the safety of every boy and girl who rides buses. Every management decision ultimately affects youngsters. The efficient use of your time determines the environment in which everyone – pupils, parents, drivers, and staff – operates.

So develop your management style, continually work to improve and modify it, and practice it in a fair and objective manner. Every decision, no matter how small and innocent it appears to be, must be handled fairly and openly, with patience and the time it deserves. The ultimate decision of the manager frequently is not as important as the process. Good time management requires patience and time for employees.

## PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

Set your personal goals and values. Establish in your own mind the accomplishments you want to realize, and chart your course.

The first step is to make a daily list of things to do. How you list them is a personal option. You can list jobs by priority, or list them as you think of them. Regardless, sit quietly and make a list (don't forget a time for solitude and reflection; I cannot stress this more emphatically).

Some jobs will be short, some long, but be sure everything is included. And when you've completed the job, scratch it from your list. Get rid of the difficult jobs early, and as soon as possible. Once again, difficulty is a subjective issue. Writing reports might be hard for one person, easy for another. But remember, the choice is yours, because you're managing your own time. Then after you eliminate the tough jobs, you can relax with the easy ones.

Keep your meetings to an absolute minimum, to the point, and on time. Nothing will degrade time faster than a meaningless meeting, during which everyone talks and generates paperwork, simply because they thought it was the thing to do. When a meeting has met its goals, end it as soon as possible.

You need your own privacy. Make sure your staff knows about it and respects it.

Don't lose sight of your personal goals, and be satisfied with yourself when you know you've done your very best. Life is not perfect, and no one reaches perfection, especially in pupil transportation, in which there are so many Monday morning quarterbacks. Good school bus operators are analogous to good basketball officials – half the crowd is against you, and no one expresses their appreciation for your good job. So take contentment and peace of mind in your accomplishments, and be fully gratified with them. When you're at peace with yourself, who can disturb you?

In summary, transportation managers spend approximately half their lives working in a difficult, time-consuming job. Of all the variables they face, the one constant is each hour – there are always 60 minutes in it. So how they use their time is up to them. If it's disorganized and chaotic, they face long, frustrating days. When they plan their time and follow it, the days become more rewarding and productive.

We can never recapture yesterday, so make the most of today.

A good manager must keep in touch with reality. One of the traps a manager falls into is the one of being "trapped behind the desk." Committee meetings, correspon-

dence, and personnel problems can frequently isolate a manager in the office, sometimes to the point that it's difficult to get out on the street where the action is. And that's where it is, and that's where it changes. A successful manager works hard to maintain a balance between desk work and field work.

A means to help keep this balance is an advisory committee. Selected people who meet regularly with the administrator can make invaluable contributions regarding problems, how to solve them, and changing conditions. The administrator who solicits a variety of suggestions is a pro-active one, and will be able to gain knowledge and understanding.

Furthermore, by listening to different opinions, one gains more alternatives from which to choose and increases the options. The ultimate benefits are wiser and sounder decisions, based on a solid platform of facts and real life experiences. This type of decision is easier to defend and support.

The committee membership will vary, but a good cross section is desirable. For example, parents, bus drivers, principals, mechanics, and outside agencies are generally a must.

Size, too, will fluctuate because there's no ideal model. But remember, the successful manager is looking for input and achievement, not theory. Common sense and trial and error will help determine the size and makeup of the committee. The important thing is to use it.

**Thought for the Day: Successful people can't spend their time talking about the past or about the future. They don't possess the past. It's gone. They don't possess the future. It hasn't come yet. Their only possession is NOW—they must make the most of it.**

## PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Contrary to the impression of the lay public, pupil transportation is not a function of machines. Rather, it is a people business. Dedicated men and women make an operation successful, and their dedication depends on you, for you are their leader. Your style shapes and forms your employees' style.

Maintain their dignity. Treat each employee just like you want to be treated. View each subordinate as an individual, each person needing a different approach. People hear what they want to hear and see what they want to see, so never assume you can handle every person in an identical style.

Give them the tools to do their jobs. One of the most important strengths of a good manager is the devotion to teaching. Good management requires showing employees how to do their jobs. The public thinks a good manager is a tough manager—true, but he must be a teacher first. Demanding high performance is useless if the administrator hasn't taught his employees how to do their work. Make sure they clearly understand their responsibilities. Clear communication is difficult at best, one reason being the nature of a bus driver's work. They're out driving! So your time will be well spent, and spend it you must, on making your job assignments as clear as you can make them. A systematic double-check will also be

time well spent. Conduct periodic meetings and listen to your staff.

Assign employees their jobs and let them perform. A man once said, "good leaders inspire others with confidence in them; great leaders inspire others with confidence in themselves." Employees who know that the boss has confidence in them are employees of high productivity. Your attention to this practice will benefit your employees, the organization, and yourself many times over.

Give them a different job if they don't measure up to your standard. In our ever-changing society with its ever-changing requirements, job responsibilities frequently change. Personalities don't adjust as easily. Your time must be devoted to an analysis and review of everyone's performance before a serious problem develops. Fit the right man to the right job. Focus on each individual's qualities and utilize them.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Information is the basis on which to make sound decisions. An administrator's typical day is full of judgments, and the more data that's available, the easier it is to make defensible decisions.

Data collection is necessary and should be viewed as an "ounce of prevention, a pound of cure" process. It must be collected on a routine, systematic basis. At specific intervals, the raw material must be collected and analyzed, and subsequently used. The ability to reach a decision is made easier when one has adequate information at hand.

By contrast, when the superintendent needs a transportation decision, he needs it "ASAP." No administrator

can give him a sound answer if he has nothing to rely on. It's too late to build a database at the last minute. So the systematic process is a necessary one.

Different systems will have different needs, and no one document will address all unique requirements. But there is universal and fundamental pupil information which every manager should have and know.

Each route bus must be a data center. For it, the following information must be routinely collected, using a normal day in which to record it (some departments make several daily recordings and average them).

1. Total Trips Per Day
   a. regular trips per day
   b. kindergarten trips per day
   c. special education/special program trips per day
2. Total number of pupils transported
   a. number of regular pupils
   b. number of kindergarten pupils
   c. number of special education/special program pupils
3. Total daily mileage
   a. live miles (with pupils)
   b. dead miles (without pupils)
4. Total daily hours
   a. live time (with pupils)
   b. dead time (without pupils)
5. Trip schedule to and from school
   a. sequential bus-stop listing with the time and location
   b. odometer reading for each stop
   c. mileage between stops and school

6. Field trip, athletic trips, and charter trip information (same as items 1 - 5 above)

This information is of little or no value if the administrator doesn't systematically review it. Decisions are relatively easy when based on valid facts – facts which are periodically studied. Hasty decisions founded on analyzed data lead to shaky judgments.

The driver manifest form will capture the required information. They should be completed by the bus drivers on a routine basis, generally once a month. The appropriate interval will be determined by the administrator who knows the needs.

**CAUTION**

Edit the drivers' reports. A staff member must carefully review them for accuracy and completeness. Arithmetic errors, misunderstandings, and on-the-road interruptions create faulty data. Furthermore, many men and women are involved, and the greater the number who participate in this type of effort, the greater the chance for miscues. Collect the information systematically. Edit it systematically.

In summary, management needs information. Budget development, cost controls, route utilization, school starting times, and labor utilization are but a few primary areas which depend on the data collected in these charts.

Information will not replace the human judgment factor, but it will aid the administrator. It will help in making better decisions and the job easier and more rewarding.

Use a preventive maintenance program, and continue, and continue, and continue to use it. The old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" is absolutely correct in a school bus operation. A preventive program is invaluable to the success of an operation. Remember the key assets of the program:

1. A mechanic systematically checks each system of the vehicle – before it breaks down.

2. Mechanics are using talent and expertise to assess the machinery; not just replacing broken-down parts.

3. The program has planned in advance the hours and/or miles of the life of the parts – this represents your good time management.

4. The program permits the dispatchers to utilize the buses available to them.

5. The program generates decisions founded on methodical deliberations. A good manager tries to avoid being backed into a corner, and tries to minimize emergency decisions.

Collect data on a systematic basis, and use it to make sound judgments. At regular intervals, preferably each month, a transportation director must analyze the following data for the entire fleet:

1. Number of regular bus trips each morning
2. Number of kindergarten bus trips each day
3. Number of special programs (reading, foreign language) trips each day
4. Number of regular pupils per trip (one-way)
5. Number of kindergarten pupils per trip

6. Number of special program pupils
7. Total number of pupils
8. Total daily mileage
   a. live miles
   b. dead miles
9. Total daily hours
   a. live hours
   b. dead hours

Construct a sound budget based on facts and make sound decisions from it. The days of adding ten percent to last year's budget are gone. A transportation director manages millions of dollars and the budget must be the best possible tool available. It will be when it is developed on a sound basis with systematic frequency. On a regular routine, preferably once a month, the director should review:

1. The departmental payroll
2. The number of labor hours on that payroll
3. The daily bus mileage.
4. The daily fuel consumption
5. The vehicle parts inventory
6. The reconciliation of each budget category for the
   a. current month
   b. year-to-date
   c. previous years' year-to-date

Bear in mind, this monthly analysis should not be an in-depth budget study. There isn't enough time for that, but you must manage your time so that you carefully peruse the expenditures each month. It's amazing how

frequently bookkeepers and computers make errors, and if you don't catch them, no one else will.

## MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT

One of the administrator's functions is to teach the staff; to train and retrain them in the complexities of their jobs. If people are not given adequate preparation, they can't be held accountable. On the other hand, when they do receive nurture and in-service training they should be periodically evaluated.

Evaluation must be a positive act. It is a means of using open, truthful communication, positive as well as negative, in an effort to help. It is a way of giving earned praise, and helping one realize weaknesses and shortcomings. And everyone has them.

The Management Assessment program is typical. Designed only for administrative/management personnel, it permits both individuals to assess themselves. Their shared introspection will be revealing to themselves as well as each other.

The administrator must always be fair and honest, bearing in mind that others are too. In fact, studies show that salary is not the major factor in job satisfaction, it's an open forum during which management helps in a positive manner. Employees self-rating scales are valid and reliable, as a truthful manager generally won't point out a weakness that the employee doesn't already suspect.

The subjects in the Management Assessment Program are categorical. Every system has different policies and procedures, and the local administrator must tailor the subjects to fit the department's needs and style. Furthermore, the rating instrument(s) vary. Checkoffs, number

scales (1-100), plus or minus ( + or -), yes or no, or an acknowledgment are rather typical. The important factor is the positive mode of training and preparation, which must be inherent throughout the process.

**Thought for the Day: Criticism should leave people with the idea that they have been helped.**

## MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

**Management:** _____

1. Human relations: _____
2. Rapport with personnel: _____
3. Objective analysis: _____
4. Decision making: _____
5. Leadership: _____
6. Labor negotiations: _____
   a. Union: _____
   b. Non-union: _____
7. Policies: _____

**Personnel:** _____

Recruitment - Retention _____

Personnel Management: _____
1. Human relations: _____
2. Leadership: _____
3. Personnel procedures: _____
   a. Individual records: _____
   b. Confidentiality: _____
   c. Insurance/Fringe benefits: _____

**Management:** _____

Administration: _____
1. Accounting: _____
2. Accounts payable: _____
3. Accounts receivable: _____
4. Budget development: _____
5. Budget reconciliation: _____
6. Payroll - Labor distribution: _____
7. Cost center control: _____
   a. Bus: _____
   b. School(s): _____
   c. Program: _____
8. Bottom line accountability: _____
9. Accident review committee: _____

**Public Relations:** _____

Customer Relations: _____
1. School staff: _____
2. School board: _____
3. P.T.A.: _____

Planning and Scheduling: _____

School bus schedules: _____

Attendance areas: _____

Information Management: _____
1. Route miles: _____
2. Route hours: _____
3. Passenger capacities: _____

Extra curricular functions: _____
1. Charter trips: _____
2. Field trips: _____
3. After-school activities: _____

Dispatching: _____

Driver assignments: _____

Customer relations: _____

Driver relations: _____

Union agreements: _____

Billings: _____

Operations Coordination: _____

1. Dispatcher: _____
2. Driver trainer: _____
3. Shop foreman: _____
4. Union representative: _____

Driver Training: _____

Pre-service: _____
1. Classroom: _____
2. Behind-the-wheel: _____
3. Licensing: _____
4. Local/State regulations: _____

In-Service: _____
1. On route: _____
2. Safety meetings: _____

Safety Awards: _____

1. Driver recognition: _____
2. Incentive programs: _____

Vehicle Maintenance: _____

1. Vehicle service: _____
2. Vehicle maintenance: _____
3. Vehicle shops: _____
4. Vehicle management: _____

Vehicle Specifications: _____
_____
_____

I have evaluated each category with progress, accomplishment, and needs as goals to be achieved.

_____ Date

Self-Evaluation Date

## PERSONNEL EVALUATION

Name: _____

Division: _____

Position: _____

Rating:

| EXPLANATION OF RATING FACTORS | UNSATIS FACTORY | FAIR | GOOD | VERY GOOD | OUT STANDING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE:<br><br>Ability to get along with others, meeting and dealing with public, courtesy, tact, cheerfulness, effectiveness of communications. | | | | | |
| 2. ADMINISTRATIVE/SUPERVISORY ABILITY<br><br>Promptness of action, soundness of decisions, capacity to analyze, organize, and plan effectively: to delegate authority or responsibility, capacity to train employees, and to lay out work, ability to build morale, confidence and respect in employees. | | | | | |
| 3. DEPENDABILITY<br><br>Degree to which employee can always be relied upon to do the job with little or no supervision. | | | | | |
| 4. QUALITY OF WORK<br><br>Accuracy, neatness, effective completion of work and work assignments. | | | | | |
| 5. QUANTITY OF WORK<br><br>Amount of acceptable work performed, completion of work on schedule. | | | | | |
| 6. WILLINGNESS<br><br>Cooperation, enthusiasm for job duties, loyalty, willingness to assume responsibilities, initiative. | | | | | |

| EXPLANATION OF RATING FACTORS | UNSATIS FACTORY | FAIR | GOOD | VERY GOOD | OUT STANDING |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7. ADAPTABILITY<br><br>Ability to learn, ability to perform under changes in work or working conditions, performance in emergencies. | | | | | |
| 8. JOB INTELLIGENCE<br><br>The ability to understand the essential functions of this job, to grasp details, to make correct decisions, to solve new problems, creativity. | | | | | |
| 9. PERSONAL APPEARANCE<br><br>Cleanliness and personal hygiene, neatness and taste in dress. | | | | | |
| 10. WORK HABITS<br><br>Observance of working hours, attendance, care of equipment, compliance with instruction, safety, housekeeping. | | | | | |
| 11. OVERALL RATING | | | | | |

12. COMMENTS

_____

_____

_____

_____ _____

(Signature of Employee) (Date)

_____ _____

(Signature of Rater) (Date)

CHAPTER 4

# COMMUNICATIONS

The nature of pupil transportation dictates that its communications are complex, emotional, and difficult. In most operations, the top administrator is in an office. The employees – bus drivers, mechanics, trainers, and in many cases, dispatchers – are in different locations. In a city or urban operation, a professional administrator might be responsible for several terminals.

At the other end of the spectrum is a rural situation in which drivers keep their buses at home, gas stations, even at empty parking lots, and are scattered throughout the whole school district. All of which points out the acute need for communications. This chapter will deal with two categories of communications:

1. Staff communications
2. Public communications

Communications is the freedom and the ability to deal openly with others. It's the knack, if you wish, of having everyone clearly understand what you are trying to say and clearly understand what you're trying to write.

## STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

Transportation administrators cannot always be with all their employees. As a result, they select a staff which helps them carry out the objectives and the goals of the department. It's absolutely necessary that they communicate clearly with their immediate subordinates, for they are their right arms. They are the men and women who

speak in their behalf and serve as an alter-ego in every aspect of the operation. So it's paramount that administrators be conscious of the need to communicate clearly with the staff. At the same time, they must be fully aware of the need for the staff to communicate accurately to them. Throughout this chapter, as well as in other parts of the book, the author will stress this.

Communications are not one-way. Communications, be it between the top administrators and their subordinates, bus drivers, or mechanics, must be two-way. Understanding depends just as much on one's ability to respond as it does on the administrator who is giving instructions.

It's important for the administrator to have an open-door policy. When a director maintains one, communications are greatly enhanced. For example, people can ask questions if they're not clear on directions or instructions. People simply can ask for clarification of memos. And perhaps above all, people can make suggestions. Remember that communications is the ability to make people understand what you're trying to say and write.

In many cases, people hear only what they like to hear. They retain about 10 percent of all the things that they're presented with in writing, so an open-door policy does much for establishing clarity, answering unexpected and unforeseen questions, and hearing suggestions.

An open-door policy does not mean anarchy. It doesn't mean that anybody can come in off the street, be they clerical staff, parents, bus drivers, or immediate subordinates, barge in and ask, "What do you think of this?" An open-door policy must be controlled by the manager to permit doing manager's duties. After all, this is time management. So an open-door policy does not mean that

the office is always open. Two things occur if that is the environment in which the operation is run:

1. The top administrator will never get any work done.

2. People will not give careful attention and thought to their problems. If they know they can walk in and get it off their chest without any homework on their part, they will.

So managers must protect the open-door policy. How do they do it? There are several ways, each of which is determined by the local administrator. One way is to simply have a prescribed time in which the door is open. Another way is the scheduling of appointments by a secretary. A third is by the telephone at certain times of the day. (Only certain days might be available.) None of this precludes an emergency, of course. This applies only to the routine administrative functions every department has, and have them it will. Incidentally, what works in Brookline, Massachusetts, might not work in San Antonio, Texas. But that which does will be determined in each location.

There is a great characteristic that one needs to be a good communicator, and that is being a good listener. We have two ears and one mouth, and that's so that we can hear twice as much as we talk. There are several reasons for this.

People want to be heard. They want, and need, the opportunity to get things off their chests. It might not be as important to you as an administrator; at least, it might not rank as high on your priority list as it does on their's, but you must be a good listener and give them the opportunity to communicate with you. Remember, communication is

two-way, and listening is a very vital facet of conversation. By listening, incidentally, a good administrator gains a tremendous storehouse of information. Mechanics and drivers are all over the school system, rarely seeing "their boss."

A good administrator who listens to the people on the street gains a great deal of knowledge and insight into situations which otherwise would only be seen in paper form. And from an administrative and managerial standpoint, that is one of the greatest burdens one must carry – seeing only one side – the memo version. One's horizon should never be restricted to the edge of one's desk.

By being a good listener and maintaining two-way communications, you will learn a great deal about your own operation and more importantly, benefit from a different perspective. Many engineering innovations are the result of hands-on suggestions and comments from those who are working out in the field, not lab technology. From a management standpoint, communication requires that a professional administrator let people respond. Here again, they typically retain about 10 percent of the stimuli they see and hear every day. It's fact that we don't listen to advertisements, even though the television and radio blare with them. We don't read billboards as we drive on the highway, and we really don't retain most of the printed material that passes before us. All of which makes it even more difficult for a transportation administrator.

Employees are generally not locked in an auditorium once a week so administrators can present directions, let people ask questions about them, and be satisfied that they understand. On the contrary, it's the opposite situation. They must deal with many people from diverse backgrounds and communicate to them something that is most

important, and hope that they understand it. So in their communications, they must be conscious of writing memos, directives, and letters to employees at their level of understanding. They must always put themselves in other's shoes, write messages in that light. They already understand their communication, so it can't be written at that level. It must be written to the level of the audience.

Let's speak for a moment about some other ramifications of announcements and communications. Transportation is absolute in many respects. Barring real emergencies, schools always start on time. Aside from holidays, schools are in session and buses must run and children must meet them. This means that adequate time must be given for the distribution of announcements, particularly in rural areas. This sounds like a simple and unnecessary concern, but remember the goal of communications!

Consider the timeliness of the announcements. Many unnecessary problems are created simply because an announcement did not reach people in time. Make sure, for example, that the message can be delivered in time to adequately implement the change. There is no point in planning bus schedules for months and then sending out the announcement Friday afternoon for a Monday morning implementation. This creates chaos, misunderstanding, hard feelings and embarrassment.

Let people have time to think about the message. Give them time to consider that which you are describing, those things which are being demanded, and time to make the necessary adjustments to carry them out successfully.

Make your communications as brief and to the point as possible. One of the worst means of communication is to write a whole page when one paragraph will clearly ex-

plain what you're trying to say. People typically throw things away when it involves too much reading, and after all, an administrator is generally writing messages for direction and understanding, not a book. So be brief. Be to the point.

In all operations, and this is particularly true of pupil transportation, there are several other characteristics which successful administrators and managers possess. They are practices that good managers employ. It's important that we keep in perspective the necessity of two-way communication, that we keep in focus the need to respond and the need to listen, as well as send out instructions and directives. Open communication is the result of an open climate, an open-door policy, and an environment in which these characteristics are used and are exhibited by a top administrator.

The first one is recognition. All people like to be recognized. The sweetest music to people's ears is their own names, and we all appreciate being known, even by no more than a handshake or a nod.

The job of a school bus driver is a lonely one. Ninety-nine percent of the time, drivers are on their own. Even when they are parked at a terminal with a hundred other busses, once they leave, they are by themselves. They must make their own decsions and handle a variety of situations without the benefit of walking down the hall and asking the boss for advice. They're strictly on their own. With that goes the fact that many, many good things that the driver does are unseen. Walk through the shop and show an intererst in the mechanics' work, especially a brake job when it's snowing. So people are prone to listen, and as a result, understand, when they know that the boss still recognizes them.

The second is laughter. The author stresses many times that administrators discern the climate that they establish for employees. They must recognize that their moods and style influence their employees. When an administrator is happy, calm, and patient, so will be most of the employees. To the contrary, when one is excitable, and inclined to snap judgments and decisions, employees frequently will follow the same characteristics. So it's important that a professional manager recognize laughter and use it, and see the positive and the humor in situations. To repeat, pupil transportation is not a rigid, stereotype atmosphere. In virtually every school bus operation, something new occurs every day. A director of transportation constantly faces situations and questions for which there is no precedent and no immediate answer. This can be frustrating, but good managers combat it with laughter. One, for their own personal health, and two, for the health of the employees. When they laugh, so do the people with whom they work. So a good administrator understands laughter.

The third is praise. A good administrator praises people when they deserve it. Praise is two-way because it is the manifestation of the director's appreciation of an employee's good work. Many workers, rightly or wrongly, feel that the boss only pays attention to them when something goes wrong. Employees appreciate praise, and it has been proven many times, both clinically and in field studies, that people typically respond faster, produce more, and work far more efficiently in a climate in which they are praised and rewarded for good work. Call a driver at home during the day, or send a handwritten note over to the shop. Praise is an excellent communications tool when used sincerely. It's also a good management tool, but at all times it must be used genuinely.

The fourth characteristic is listening. One can learn by hearing another person's viewpoint. Typical employees want to do a job and want to do it well, and are proud of their work. Employees suffer silently when they know they've made a mistake, like to make suggestions, and need to blow off steam. They need to confide in someone whom they respect and trust. A good administrator must allow time for the employees, a great deal of which will be used just for listening. In most cases, their conversation is their therapy. Once they've gotten it out in the open and had a chance to speak one-on-one with their boss and tell him their feelings and fears, they feel much better. This is therapy in itself, all made possible by the administrator's willingness to listen.

The fifth characteristic which all successful managers and administrators possess is saying "thank you." Communication which expresses the appreciation for a job well done is most valuable. When an organization is decentralized, it's even more important. A good administrator expresses his appreciation when it is deserved.

Incidentally, communication must be conducted with the philosophy that a manager praises publicly and reprimands privately.

## PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

There is no more visible aspect of the school system than pupil transportation. No part of a school system is more dependent upon good communications and good understanding.

The understanding is the hard part. Most people in this country don't understand the values of pupil transportation nor do they understand the hard work that is required of a successful organization. This chapter does not

address trying to create better understanding of logistics, rather, it concentrates on the importance of awareness.

A good administrator will never satisfy everyone; it's impossible. A good manager will never make everyone happy; it can't be done. These are not negative comments, but in order to do a good job, decisions must be made and judgments must be rendered, most of which are not agreeable to everyone. Be that as it may, what's important are several things to follow in dealing with the public.

For many years, money was readily available in this country for education. Since the late 1970's, however, funds have been reduced in many areas, and in the last several years more and more pressure has been placed on districts to economize. Some school systems have looked to the elimination of transportation as a budget-saving device. In virtually every case, they found out that that was false economy. One thing parents don't ever give up in a school system is school bus service. Due to these pressures, there's even more reason to have good communications with the public (remember that many parents' concept of the school system is the bus that takes their children to school; their impression of the school district is the bus driver).

There are several things about which a top administrator must be concerned in communicating with the public. Some departments of a school system can be almost isolated from the public, but not school bus operations. So pupil transportation directors must be conscious of the fact that like it or not, they're dealing with different segments of the public at all times. One thing to be concerned about is the manner in which the telephone is answered. Just as parents perceive the school system by the bus their children ride, so do most people perceive the

transportation program just by the way a telephone is answered. Overall, and it's suggested 99 percent of the time, people are genuinely seeking help. They ask questions about which they appreciate a fair and honest answer. One of the pitfalls that a staff can fall into is the failure to recognize that what is routine and mundane for them is not at all understood by the general public. What transportation personnel know and take for granted, and have experienced for many years, is unclear to a lay person, especially a kindergarten mother who has never had any contact with the school system or a school bus. So there are several things to use when working with staff and parents:

Patience – be a good listener. In the afternoon, when a child comes home from school and tells its mother what happened and she immediately calls the office, remember that she's only heard one version. It's necessary to patiently listen to the first side, which at that point might not require an answer; one might have solved most of the problem merely by listening to a parent's plea.

Understanding – there's nothing more dear to a parent than a child. It's an awesome responsibility that a school bus driver has for the lives of one to 90 youngsters, twice a day, on freeways, in snow storms, and in hurricanes. That awesomeness carries over to a mother who stays home all day worrying about her five-year-old going to school for the first time. The empathy and understanding that one uses over the telephone are absolutely necessary in dealing with the parent and the public.

Tolerance – none of us is perfect. Not one of us has enjoyed saying something perfectly or doing something for which we have no regret. Likewise with parents. Likewise

with children. Staff communication with the public requires tolerance.

Helpfulness – bus routes and schedules are often complex to parents. Good managers see that their staff helps people understand them. In fact, they insist on it.

There are variables in the operation. Traffic conditions and weather conditions are two examples of conditions over which no one, certainly the bus driver, has any control. While schedules are paramount, there are times when they can't be met with certainty. One must be helpful at all times in explaining these situations. Helpfulness is a characteristic which all service people must have.

Cheerfulness – a man from Tennessee once said, "A smile adds to one's face value," and this is very true, especially in dealing with children. Bus drivers can't watch their audience. They have their backs to the children, and encounter a variety of situations, particularly with younger ones. One of the greatest disarming acts for youngsters is a smile. One of the worst things a bus driver can do with junior high children is fight back. Very few people can get mad, or stay mad, when a driver is constantly cheerful and pleasant. So the fifth category is cheerfulness.

In summary, an administrator looks for these traits and these abilities in the staff and should constantly work with the staff to cultivate them.

There are several other points in the science and skill of communications which deserve mention. They are not technical procedures as much as they are qualities. For example, in dealing with people, be honest. People don't always like the answer, but they do like an honest one. There are times when an administrator should not give an immediate response. There are many occasions in which

an administrator responds, "I don't know, but I'll find out." And with that goes an, "I'll get back to you." Keep your word. Interestingly, many calls are soon forgotten by the parent within a day or two because their call might have been an emotional one; a chance to blow off steam. People forget the situation and the subsequent answer, but what they don't ever forget is that the manager called them back. That becomes the image of the program while the failure to keep one's word brands the operation. So be open. When you don't know an answer, say so. When you're not sure of something, explain why. We all appreciate integrity and respect.

Be objective. It is a tremendous public trust to be in charge of a school bus fleet. It's a frightful responsibility to worry about the safety of children. Fairness and objectivity create a good administrative climate, and the bottom line of a good administrative climate is safety. So be objective, be fair to all parents, children, employees and colleagues. When one is fair, one doesn't have to worry about whose side one chose the day before.

**Thought for the Day: A good teacher is someone who can understand those not very good at explaining, and explain it to those not very good at understanding.**

## STAFF-BOARD RELATIONS

No other department in a school system is so dependent upon interrelationships. Pupil transportation simply is not a technical process or a computer program in which formulas are developed and buttons are pushed. On the contrary, day in and day out, it's completely dependent on the ability of men and women to work together, who un-

derstand mutual goals and cooperate in a spirit of getting the job done. All these things depend on a healthy and free relationship within a staff.

Some organizations have but one employee, so this does not address that situation. Most departments do have more than one person however: a director, at least one trainer, probably a field supervisor, a mechanic, a secretary, and some supporting personnel. At any rate, when you have more than one person, you need successful interrelationships. Bear in mind that a good, wholesome, and healthy relationship must be primarily devoted to a working one. In a management role one cannot be liked by everyone, or attempt to satisfy everyone's needs. The best decisions probably upset, or at least dissatisfy, 50 percent of the clientele. So it is with interrelationships. People must work together and share the common goals of the operation – to transport children safely, efficiently, and economically. You can't compromise these goals, and relationships must be developed to meet these demands. It doesn't mean, of course, that everyone has to like each other or be friends. In most cases, it's not advisable for the manager to participate in after-hours social events with the work force.

Transportation directors must conduct themselves in a professional manner. They must maintain a high standard of conduct, decorum, and propriety, and as best they can, see to it that their colleagues and subordinates do likewise. Chances are they will when a good example is set. As was noted earlier, professional managers set the stage for the entire program. When they have a high standard of conduct, most people will try to meet it.

There are several guidelines for management personnel to follow in their daily conduct. These guidelines are

not rigid, nor should they be viewed as something to be consciously plugged into the work day. On the contrary, they are life-styles, operating styles, and management styles, all of which require hard work to maintain each day, especially in the little things in life.

The first guideline is respect. Respect others and be respectful of their feelings, their attitudes, and their style. None of us are perfect and none of us are identical. Each of us operates in a style that we feel is our best and one in which we feel most comfortable. Respect that in others. Respect the fact that they're working just as hard as you are. Respect the fact that they might be an afternoon person while you're more comfortable working hard in the morning. Remember, you're all sharing the same goals. You're all working to meet them. So respect others and be conscious of their different styles. And this respect is not restricted to major issues.

Life takes place 24 hours a day, and in interrelationships, it's the little things that create opinions. It's the seemingly little things that make us come to conclusions and form opinions about other people and other events.

For example, be on time to meetings. When you set a schedule start the meeting on time. Secondly, when you are at someone else's meeting, be there on time. There's nothing more frustrating for both parties to have interruptions because someone comes to the meeting late and disrupts the chain of thought. Especially irritating are the people who are consistently late.

This chapter does not address itself to the emergencies or the unavoidable events with which we all come in contact. The superintendent calls, you go to his office. "The president can see you now"-that's an order, not an invitation. That's excusable and understandable. What is

not excusable or understandable is the act of consistent tardiness. So be respectful. Put yourself, and you are a professional administrator, in the other administrator's shoes. He's worked hard to prepare everything for the meeting. He saved a place for you, perhaps even at your own request, for a five-minute talk. Don't be late.

The second guideline is the manner in which you present yourself each day. It's the manner in which you respond to questions; the way you work in an office with others; the way you work with your subordinates. Every person deserves dignity and every person earns the right to be treated just as you would like to be. So be open minded and recognize that others generally want to act in the same fashion.

Now everyone is not fully polished, and some don't always operate at your personal standards. That's no cause for you to compromise yourself. Keep your confidence, stay at your level, and in most cases, people will gradually recognize their weaknesses and work to meet your standards. For those who can't or won't, all the more reason for you not to compromise yourself. You are a professional manager. Countless parents trust the lives of their children to you. You have responsibilities, and you've proven your ability to handle those responsibilities. Is there any reason, then, for you to lower your standards for one or two people, over whom you might not have control anyway? The second guideline, again, is the manner in which you conduct yourself.

Number three is your personal dress code. In our country, conditions vary and demands are different. What is appropriate in New Mexico and Arizona is not going to be practical in Vermont and Maine. But every person reacts to the stage that is set before them, and you, as a

professional administrator, must look the part. The worst thing a transportation director can do is to appear in public in nonprofessional attire.

Don't come in from the shop with greasy hands. The bearing with which one meets mothers, the PTA, and an audience at the school board has much to do with the response one earns. Now this is not to say that every day one has to wear a white shirt and tie. In most cases that's appropriate, but there are some exceptions. Regardless of one's style, it must be as professional and appropriate as possible.

The second topic in this chapter is school board relations. This discussion will treat relationships between the staff and other school departments, the school board, and outside agencies.

There is no clear-cut plan to follow for each function. There's no stereotyped relationship one adopts in the morning with the superintendent's staff, and in the afternoon for a meeting with the PTA. Your attitude and decorum have to be honest, above board, and candid. They apply in all that you do. So this will focus mostly on a form of salesmanship, the name of the game in this chapter.

Pupil transportation is a volatile program, and it seems that each day brings a host of new problems. And that's one of the many Achilles' heels of transportation management personnel. It's only natural for everyone to be caught up in their daily routine. Over a period of time, industrious and energetic administrators constantly face problems, hear from others about their difficulties, and are always asked to solve them. They become conditioned to reacting instead of acting. It's an unfortunate part of the job, and for those who can't stand the heat, they should

look for another way to spend their working lives. Those who are the top administrators recognize the symptoms and acknowledge that there are ways to overcome them; at least, stay abreast of them.

Moreover, it's a natural phase of the job and it's not restricted to pupil transportation. Plant managers, squadron commanders—every top administrator runs into the same sort of problems. How do you conquer them, and how does the word salesmanship fit in? In this context, salesmanship is not a hard-sell advertising campaign. It's not what we're accustomed to seeing on television or reading in sales brochures. Far from it. It's ones positive attitude about things.

A good administrator works hard to acknowledge the good things that occur. And many, many good things do take place in pupil transportation. How many times do drivers go back and pick children up because another bus broke down? How often do drivers hear of a situation involving traffic delays on their radios and make a quick detour and pick the children up? How many times have bus drivers been honored for saving lives because they are often the first ones on the scene of an accident? How many times have drivers waited around during snow storms to help each other get the children to and from school as quickly as possible? Well, these happen an infinite number of times. From an administrative standpoint, the superintendent rarely knows of these events. The school board certainly doesn't, and in most cases, the public doesn't know it.

They're accustomed to seeing buses and hearing only the complaints. So the professional administrator knows that for every complaint, there might be fifty wonderful, warm, and empathic acts performed by bus drivers. But

the only people the school board and the superintendent run into are two unhappy parents at a meeting on a rainy night. (Later, it often turns out one of them didn't even have a child in school.) Be that as it may, the school board still only heard two people complaining about the school bus service.

The superintendent's office rarely gets a call from a mother thanking it for a good bus operation! Inescapable, then, is the fact that two events occur in a director's daily life—some bad, but on the other side of the coin, some awfully good. Salesmanship is making sure that the superintendent, the school board, and the public hear both sides.

It has been said, "A city on a hill cannot be hid," and that's true of the good things that occur in the pupil transportation program. Professional administrators cannot create untrue and false performances, and certainly can't compliment themselves. But they must be diligent in recognizing the good things that people do—the acts of mercy above and beyond the call of duty. In a subtle way, they must simply state those facts on every occasion. Bringing the safe driving award program for bus drivers to the attention of the school board and the superintendent, and giving local newspapers free publicity regarding safe driving and faithful employee awards, are all quiet salesmanship. Not phony, or false, salesmanship—just factual descriptions of the good things that occur. When you go to a motel, you often see a plaque celebrating an employee of the month. It's not uncommon in a nice restaurant to see the waiter who is being recognized for good service. Is it any problem, then, to do the same for your bus drivers, who aren't serving meals, but entrusted with the lives of hundreds and hundreds of boys and girls?

Many administrators do perform quiet salesmanship, and it's to their credit that they do. Others do not, and that creates poor staff relationships and public relations.

Salesmanship also takes place in many ways in an administrator's day. A request for more supplies, a recommendation to change school starting and closing times, and the budget document all depend on salesmanship – not loud, hard-sell efforts, but the quiet selling that takes place through the manner in which he conducts himself and presents his information. Remember, budgets must be based on sound data and represent the best available information at the time. When the school board considers a budget request which has obviously been handled in a professional manner, their support is the result of salesmanship. So a professional administrator in a school system is a salesman, and he sells his program by following the guidelines which I am going to repeat. They are:

1. Respect of others
2. Personal mannerism and conduct
3. Personal dress

The bottom line of this chapter is the perception of these basic guidelines and their subsequent implementation. When following them and creating wholesome and productive relationships, children do get better bus service. Parents begin to see a viable, efficient, and economical school bus operation, and the superintendent and school board realize it.

Remember, life is not a simple arithmetic process which punches numbers in and out and reconciles them at the bottom of the ledger. Pupil transportation is individual associations and personal attitudes. It's people who are dealing with hundreds of youthful personalities each day. Children are different in the afternoon than they are

in the morning, and a driver who works with them in the morning soon discovers that they have to be handled differently in the afternoon. These are real facts of life and are characteristic of a school bus operation. Safe, efficient, and economical operations can't be conducted by accountants who wear green eye shades. They must be directed by professional managers and administrators who create and maintain a high level of productive relationships.

**Thought for the Day: Tact is the making of a point without making an enemy.**

## PUBLIC RELATIONS

The transportation administrator can never lose sight of daily public relations. Several significant procedures must be relied on regarding public relations. The procedures are like a long walk. No one step is more important than another, and most should be natural, not planned. One of the most important administrative features is an informal, relaxed and sincere atmosphere. Public relations cannot be a rigid program to be turned on and off with formality. On the contrary it is a daily, piece-by-piece, effort. It must be practiced, not preached, with fairness, courtesy, ethics, integrity, common sense, enthusiasm, communications, appreciation and recognition.

The administrator comes into contact with diverse customers: parents, bus drivers, principals, teachers, superintendents, board members, colleagues, news media, and legislators. All have a problem, which in their minds, has a simple answer. Every time the administrator is in contact with someone, public relations is taking place.

People ask questions and want answers. They might call to ask the morning bus schedule, the price of a new bus, or request a copy of the seat belt legislation. Each is a legitimate question, and each deserves a legitimate answer.

People register complaints and want to be heard. They may complain that their daughter's bus was late. They might want the driver fired because someone took their son's hat. And they might complain about school being dismissed early due to inclement weather while they're at work. Each is important to the caller, so be fair. They might not like your answer because it isn't what they want to hear, but they will always respect a fair and honest answer.

Remember that the drivers have no other adult to whom they can speak. They must make snap judgments and decisions without the benefit of a boss across the hall. The administrator must practice patience and understanding with employees and be appreciative of the staff.

From coast to coast, people are typical. All of us like to feel that our efforts are appreciated. A study revealed that employers thought wages were the employees' prime concern, when in reality, the most important thing to the workers was their recognition by the management. Administrators generally fight their battles from a desk, and it is incumbent on them to express their appreciation for the drivers who fight their battles with children, motorists, and parents. A man once said the two most important words in the English language are "thank you."

People must always be recognized by the administrator. Everyone wants to hear his or her own name; everyone wants to be remembered. Nothing contributes more to the degradation of public relations than an ad-

ministrator who fails to say hello or ignores someone. A handshake, a wave, even a nod of the head costs nothing, yet are never forgotten.

In few vocations or professions is one able to satisfy everyone. Pupil transportation administrators certainly can't, if they say yes to everyone, their directions will be like aimless wanderings. They will have to say no many times, and stand firmly on their integrity and ethics. Many times "no" is not the answer they would like to give, but one can never be inconsistent to different people who pose the identical question.

A pupil transportation administrator's day is replete with judgment. Every situation must be considered, data evaluated, and the best possible judgment determined. One of the most effective talents to rely upon is common sense. While we live in the technological age and much depends on machines, in the final analysis, virtually everyone understands common sense.

When we think of outstanding public relations aspects, two come to mind:

1. The unknown, "out of sight," logistics of transporting pupils.

2. The visible, "in people's eyes," impression of the bus system.

No other program in the school system is so affected by public relations. No other one is so involved with as many children, parents and school personnel, and judged more by everyone, each day, on its performance. Nothing seems to be more specific than the scheduled arrival time of Johnny's bus in the morning, especially when it's cold or raining.

Top administrators should always give honest answers, listen with sympathy, and keep their promises. When they do, they have good public relations.

**Thought for the Day: When you think people aren't important, give your best tools to your worst workers.**

CHAPTER 5

# ALTERNATIVE FUELS

This chapter is written to bring to your attention that it behooves a capable and aggressive manager to thoroughly investigate alternative fuel sources because a revolution is taking place.

Some of the alternative fuels are being used in school bus fleets throughout the United States and Canada. Others are not in use as of this writing, but a great deal of research is being conducted under excellent test conditions, and they deserve mention.

The fuels and their sources are not addressed in finite detail, primarily because no one is prescient in determining where the research will take us. Due to the search for alternatives to gasoline, there's a likelihood that in the near future there will be other fuels which at this point are unknown to most of us. Read this in the light that: (1) this country does need a different fuel source than crude oil from the middle east, and (2) given funding and valid testing, there are alternative sources for fossil fuels.

A manager's search must meet local demands. Conditions, be they weather, terrain, or fleet demands, vary from coast to coast, from school district to school district. What works well in a particular climate will not work in another. What's most effective at sea level might not work at elevations of over 5000 feet. The goal is not then to find a national solution. The point is that pragmatic and creative administrators will look beyond the status quo and investigate alternatives and make intelligent decisions.

The transportation profession needs to look beyond the status quo. For many years, gasoline was the sole fuel supply. It was one fuel on which up to 99 percent of all engines were built. That status quo is rapidly coming to an end, principally because gasoline is a derivative of a fossil fuel which is not replaceable. Each day, even with our good (?) conservation efforts, we deplete our sources. To aggravate this situation, remember that approximately 60 percent of our crude oil comes from foreign sources, principally from the middle east. The fact is, the middle east is a very volatile environment, with a very unstable political climate. By no means should the United States, which depends so much upon ground transportation, be so completely dependent on crude oil sources over which we have little or no control.

Those who have been through the '73 and the '79 fuel crises know the impact of gasoline lines and gasoline supply uncertainties, and the effect it can have on our society. There's no reason to be confident that school systems will be forever exempt from future gasoline shortages. Nor is there any assurance that school systems will always be the number one priority in obtaining gasoline. There's every likelihood to believe, that should there be another crisis, school systems will have to line up at the gas pumps. So, the status quo cannot be depended upon, and no astute administrator should base any plans on the availability of gasoline.

There are four alternative fuels which will be discussed in this chapter. Number one is diesel fuel; number two is natural gas; propane is number three and methanol is number four. There are assets as well as liabilities to each of the four, and by no means does this author profess to have a clear and valid choice. A lack of qualifications does not prevent one from looking at new options, however.

An aggressive administrator will look at all four and weigh the positives and negatives, and utilize the one which offers the most advantages to the operation.

With regards to the four alternative fuels, there are several criteria the administrator must consider and evaluate:

1. Cost effectiveness
2. Availability
3. The immediate sources
4. The long-term potential with regards to source
5. The supply means
6. The fleet operating range
7. Initial cost of conversion
8. Tools and diagnostic equipment
9. Mechanic's schooling and retraining

At the end of every analysis, managers must apply quid pro quo. They're going to spend some money. What do they get in return? Something for something does apply in each of these alternatives.

## DIESEL

Let's look at diesel. Diesel is a steadily growing source of fuel for many fleet operators. Many large fleets have converted from gasoline to diesel and, as a matter of policy, buy diesel engines on new equipment. There are advantages to diesel fuel. It is now available and accessible. It's price at one time was lower than gasoline, but the trend is that diesel prices have escalated to a par with unleaded gasoline prices. So, although there is a variation throughout the country, this might be a consideration in the future for those who are considering a change to diesel. Diesel engines reduce mechanical maintenance; there are no tune-ups; no spark plugs, coil, or points. A distinct

operational and financial advantage compared to preventive maintenance for gasoline engines. However, diesel fuel quality, frequent filter maintenance, and higher parts costs, bear careful scrutiny.

And furthermore, you'll sometimes lose price advantage because of the initial expenditure you must make for diesel engines. The recovery for that additional expense must come from your price of fuel and your ability to run the engine over a longer period of time with less maintenance costs, less downtime.

Again, investigation is the important step. The administrator must look at the source and determine whether it fits the system's needs.

## NATURAL GAS

The second alternative is natural gas. Once called stove gas, a term with which our grandparents are familiar, because it was originally was used in stoves. It's the gas that's used in today's ovens, clothes dryers, and in some parts of the country, for home heating.

Unknown to probably 90 percent of our country's population, natural gas is not a new vehicle fuel. It's been used in fleet operations ranging from Barrow, Alaska to Miami, Florida since 1969. As of this day, approximately 35,000 cars and trucks burn natural gas from 50 to 99 percent of the time they're in operation.

It's not a new product, nor is it a new technology. It simply has not been used a great deal in the United States for several reasons. Gasoline has generally, in the past, been readily available at an inexpensive price. Secondly, the initial conversion expense from gasoline to natural gas has restricted it to fleets which operate a great many daily

miles. Evidence indicates that the marketplace will support the greater use of natural gas in fleets as time evolves because there are several real advantages in using it.

One is its availability. The Congress of the United States acknowledges that we have over a hundred year's supply for all vehicles. Furthermore, the supply is within the continental boundaries of the United States. So, you have a great deal of natural gas available as a motor fuel and its source is completely controlled in this country.

A distinct advantage lies in its clean and full burning. There's no waste with natural gas; it's makeup is from 86 to 96 percent air. It burns cleanly, it's smog free, and does not pollute our air. This is a real important consideration for most of this country, particularly in urban areas like Los Angeles, Cleveland, and Philadelphia. In fact, for every major city in the United States.

The safety feature of natural gas ranks higher than fossil fuels because it's lighter than air. There's no puddling. Should a leak occur it escapes into the atmosphere since its so light. Vapors can't sink to the shop floor as they do with gasoline.

Some of the disadvantages are:

1. An uncertain price structure due to the deregulation of wellhead sources. As of this writing, it is much cheaper to burn natural gas than gasoline, but there's no assurance that the price structure will remain competitive. Furthermore, until production lines from the car and truck manufacturers include natural gas equipment, the conversion costs are high. And remember, the recovery of these conversion costs rests with the ability for the fleet to operate many miles each day. For a small fleet which doesn't operate a great many miles each day, recovery

costs are not prohibitive, but they will require a 5 to 10 year pay back period. This often is a stumbling block for a school district which is experiencing negative cash flow.

2. Limited use by many school bus fleets throughout the United States. Only a mere handful of school districts have installed the system. Costs should decrease as more users enter the marketplace.

One of the other advantages of natural gas is its clean burning properties, which substantially reduce maintenance and tune-ups. Data from operating fleets suggests that they run five to ten times longer on natural gas than they do on gasoline before they change their points and sparkplugs. Some fleets never change oil or points because of the cleanliness of natural gas.

## PROPANE

The third alternative fuel is propane, a fast growing fuel source for many fleets. It is a proven technology; recreational vehicles, fork lifts, and stationary engines have been using it for years. It has several advantages:

1. At the moment, even though it comes from crude oil, it is in ample supply in this country.

2. It has wide distribution, based primarily on the multitude of recreational vehicles which require propane. Because of this, supply sources are available virtually in all locations throughout the country.

3. A single vehicle can be equipped with propane. You do not need a large fleet to justify conversion costs. Small fleet operators can easily install the system, as can operators who run low daily mileage.

4. People are familiar with it and at ease with it.

Propane fueling requires a different procedure than does gasoline, and not everyone is accustomed to it. When inexperienced drivers are hired, they must be properly trained.

One of the unresolved questions about propane is the fact that you must convert your carburetor to a full propane capability. (Natural gas uses the same carburetor that a gasoline engine does. You can switch back and forth, and when the bus is traded in, you have no conversion cost). You do with propane; it is necessary to install a special carburetor in order to burn propane, and unless the buyer wants to continue using it that way, you have to replace the propane carburetor with a gasoline burning carburetor. Not that this technology can't be adopted. Every good mechanic can do it; on the other hand, one, it is a double expense, and, two, when one is not confident of the mechanic's ability, it takes time and money to have propane experts perform the job for you. So, this is a factor which a manager must consider.

Not to say that it's an overwhelming obstacle; it shouldn't be. Many school bus fleets in the country are using propane, and using it very safely and routinely.

Another distinct advantage for a school bus fleet is the occasion to isolate the buses with high mileage from those with low mileage. Unlike natural gas, propane can be installed in each vehicle independently, a real cost effective practice.

## METHANOL

The last fuel is methanol. Although it is not yet in operation throughout the country, two facets make it worthy of mention. One is that there is some excellent testing taking place with several fleets in the United States.

For example, in California, there are 500 gasoline engines in cars and trucks being operated every day on methanol. Several other states are performing the same. The potential for methanol is in its cleanliness and availability.

Methanol is a derivative of methane gas. The technology to capture it is proven and once it is available for everyone, many predict it will rank as a very viable alternative fuel. It's extremely clean and ecologically sound, and these strengths justify a manager's looking at methanol as a potential fuel source.

On a final note, research is the key to good management. There is no clear solution regarding a substitute to gasoline, but there is a definite need to look into the alternatives. Successful administrators analyze their options and make wise decisions.

**Thought for the Day: You frequently have to go way out on a limb if you want the finest fruit.**

## VEHICLE REPAIR – MAINTENANCE PRODUCTIVITY

The normal productivity goal of an administrator must be approximately 90%. The following chart should be used and studied just as the budget document is – on a systematic and routine basis. It should be a positive management tool for the manager, not a negative "witch-hunting" threat against the work force. After the employees have become accustomed to honestly filling out the charts, they will appreciate the administrator's true efforts to know his or her job, and to help them be more efficient.

To calculate the productivity ratio, measure the total

hours worked for one week, and divide them into the hours recorded in the "actual hours" column. The other columns indicate how the remaining time was used by the mechanic. The answer of the first calculation is the productivity for the week for this mechanic. For example, if the total hours is 40, and the actual hours was 35, the productivity is 87.5%. The remaining hours (5) reveal how this time was used.

## PRODUCTIVITY ANALYSIS CHART

| mechanic | work order | hours on job | * job done | hours plan | hours actual | break time | clean-up time | other time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | |

Please explain other time and exception items:

*Please use job code (sample included on next page).

## SAMPLE JOB CODE CATEGORIES

| JOB FUNCTION | CODE |
|---|---|
| Bus body | 100 |
| Brakes | 200 |
| Electrical | 300 |
| Steering | 400 |
| Engine | 500 |
| Transmission | 600 |
| Driveline | 700 |
| Wheels | 800 |
| Chassis | 900 |
| Miscellaneous | 000 |

Please note that further items must be listed within each major category. For example, in the engine compartment the following jobs must be included:

| | |
|---|---|
| Tune up | 510 |
| Motor mounts | 520 |
| Carburetor | 530 |
| Belts | 540 |
| Radiator | 550 |
| Water pump | 560 |
| Oil | 570 |
| Electrical | 580 |
| Miscellaneous | 590 |

This is a only a sample. Each operation should categorize these jobs according to its needs and accounting procedures.

CHAPTER 6

# LABOR RELATIONS

Success is determined by the level of labor relations an administrator maintains. A high level promotes safety and efficiency, a low level restricts it to mediocrity and failure. Labor relations is generally the reflection of the administration's attitude. When it's positive, labor relations will be good. A negative attitude breeds distrust and suspicion. Management must view the employees with a positive philosophy, and practice good labor relations, not preach them.

Labor relations are often perceived as a "last resort" effort, but they don't have to be. They should be the opposite, and with good faith attitudes, they will be. Both sides, management and workers, have to work at it.

It's important to develop and use a document which is negotiated, agreed to, and understood. Demands vary, the importance of the negotiator(s) doesn't. A lot of contract items are determined by the negotiator's skills, or lack of them.

## NEGOTIATING

The goal of an effective labor-management program is the negotiation of a contract which defines the relationship between management and labor and the working conditions for the employees. It generally includes salaries, benefits, and seniority procedures.

Negotiating goes on all the time. Every time you want something, you're negotiating. The menu for the drivers'

awards dinner, transferring an account clerk to a different office (she has seniority), and handling a contractor's problem driver, are "real-life" negotiating!

Years ago negotiations were viewed as adversarial arenas. Two sides met formally, attacked each other, and one went home the winner, one the loser. Strategies were usually short term, based on a premise of winning immediately. Right away.

Times have changed. Negotiating now is known to be productive when it's conducted on a "win-win" basis, with both sides willing to give up a little in order to gain a lot – based on long term strategy.

It's easy to define negotiations but difficult to do. Whenever people trade ideas in order to change situations, they're negotiating. Almost any topic can be introduced into the negotiating process, so negotiations can be complex and sensitive, and require clear and open communication.

Employees are paid by management, but each side has dissimilar ideas about the working conditions. This is where negotiations begin, since each has a different attitude. They have to communicate to decide how each other's goals can be met within realistic boundaries. Both groups should go into negotiations with a willingness to compromise. The employees may come in with a request for an eight percent increase in wages, and management might offer four percent. The final agreement could result in a five percent increase the first year and three percent the second, for example.

If negotiations are formal, they generally lead to a collective bargaining agreement (informal negotiation takes

place during the existing contract, it's part of contract administration).

## NEGOTIATING SKILLS

An effective negotiator has to be multi-talented. The most important skills of a negotiator are:

A lot of self confidence
Ability to strategize
Integrity
The talent to react under stress
Common sense
Speaking skills
Awareness of various behavior styles

Good negotiators are a rare kind of talent and must be valued for the skills they have. The head of the negotiating team should be the right person for the job. The negotiator is not necessarily the administrator, who might not have the right skills, and furthermore, has to work with the opponents for the life of the contract.

Labor negotiations need an offensive and defensive plan because they're based on strategic planning. A negotiator has to judge the climate of the sessions and know when to move forward or fall back. An effective negotiator has to look at the whole picture, and judge the other side with the whole game in mind.

The initial step in the negotiation process is the selection of a bargaining team that has respect and authority. Hopefully, the chief negotiator will have the qualities mentioned earlier.

The traditional practice of using a lawyer is under the scrutiny of some organizations. There are some drawbacks: (1) no experience in operations and personnel

management; (2) an unwillingness to compromise; (3) a tendency to depend on technicalities; and (4) a dependency on legal terms which layman can't understand. The advantages include: (1) writing protective contracts; (2) adversary experience; (3) labor law knowledge.

## PREPARING

Negotiators can't start planning when the labor agreement ends. Actually, strategy for negotiations is a drawn out procedure. "Plan your work, and work your plan" is an appropriate approach. Negotiators must have clear ideas and targets, and know when to work on them. They have to know when to compromise, and when to stand firmly. In other words, use lines from Kenny Rogers' song, The Gambler, "Know when to hold 'em, and know when to fold 'em." A good sense of timing is terribly important, and the difference between success and failure.

It's important where the negotiations are held. A room which provides privacy, comfort, writing materials, and rest room facilities is important. Two nearby rooms for group recesses are necessary, and should be provided.

The negotiating group should use signals so they can communicate with each other about avoiding a subject, when one of the group is talking too much, or when they must caucus.

Sometimes fact finding sessions are held before the formal negotiations in order to understand the ground rules. Once the groups know what general subjects are going to be discussed, they can do their homework regarding grievances, fringe benefits, accident records, pupil control, absenteeism, and general working conditions.

The group must be knowledgeable of all the major is-

sues, since the solution of major problems usually takes care of minor ones. An effective negotiator knows that a series of changes occur during negotiations: assumptions, issues, postures, and decisions. So in order to change the other side's decision, their premises have to be changed first.

The following guidelines should help negotiators in planning for bargaining sessions before the negotiations begin:

1. Review the type of grievances which have occurred most frequently.

2. Get suggestions from employees and evaluate their complaints.

3. Determine the issues that can be negotiated and ignore the one which can't.

4. Obtain copies of agreements from other groups that negotiate with the school system and from other associations.

5. Discuss your negotiations with colleagues in similar situations.

6. Don't accept statements and contentions as fact; prove them with valid data.

7. Follow the correct and legal procedures, and always be ethical.

The selection of the negotiating group:

1. The committee should be representative, and have one spokesperson who is the principal negotiator and leader.

2. The leader must be knowledgeable of the concerns

and problems, and highly respected. Again, it's paramount that the negotiators be patient, good listeners, and good communicators.

Conducting the negotiations:

1. Labor and management must appoint spokespersons who act as co-chairpersons and have equal rights.

2. The first meeting should take care of routine matters such as introductions, procedures, schedules, and the proposals.

3. During the early discussions of the proposal, don't spell out all the details. There should be agreement on the agenda and when certain topics will be discussed. Incidentally, select the easy ones first. (Everyone likes to feel like a winner.)

4. Make sure there is another room for the group in which to caucus.

5. Sometimes an impasse can be avoided by tabling the subject, and working on it later.

6. Never argue with a colleague in front of the other side, and don't hesitate to call for a recess if the committee is not working together.

7. In the case of a declared impasse, ask for outside help to review the situation. Don't rule out mediation.

8. If all else fails, a strike can be considered, but both sides often lose when the operation is stopped.

Keeping everyone informed:

1. Before the negotiations begin, explain the proposal. People are more supportive of a program when they understand it, or at least are given the chance to.

2. The negotiators should sign the agreement only after it is ratified by the membership, and everyone must be given a copy.

Prior to the negotiations, it's important that the negotiating team have information and be knowledgeable about it.

1. Salary data
   a. pay scales by position
   b. pay scales for neighboring systems and districts
   c. employee promotion policy
   d. description of employee assessment program
   e. incentive and bonus plans
   f. employee advancement opportunities
   g. average hourly, average weekly, and annual earnings
   h. frequency of cost-of-living increase
2. Payroll data
   a. number of hours in a normal workday and normal workweek
   b. starting and ending time for each route
3. Employee data
   a. listing of employees by seniority
   b. worker age listing
   c. employee benefits (medical, dental, credit union, retirement, etc.)
4. Productivity data
   a. pupil costs
   b. labor costs per route
   c. labor costs per facility/terminal
   d. percentage of labor costs in budget/contract
   e. per mile costs
   f. vehicle costs per route

5. Very important data
   a. copy of the current contract
   b. employee handbook
   c. grievance procedures
   d. check-in/out procedures
   e. vehicle maintenance reporting
   f. description of safety program
   g. substitute calls, sick leave, holiday pay, wash up rules, and seniority policies
   h. group insurance policy
   i. minutes of union meetings
   j. minutes of grievance hearings

## EMPLOYEE SECURITY

Job security is a critical concern among employees. The typical approaches to job security are:

1. Union shop. An employer may hire nonunion members, but the employee must join the union within a specified period. This is the strongest form of union security permissible under federal law. Many states have "right to work" laws that cancel the federal statutes by outlawing any form of union security, however.

2. Closed shop. A company may hire only union labor in a closed shop. This form of security is banned by federal law, but allowed in several states. If a company is not involved in interstate commerce, then a state law permitting the closed shop overrides the federal law banning it.

3. Agency shop. Employees are not forced to join or remain in the union, but those who elect not to join must pay a fee in lieu of the union dues.

## LABOR PRACTICES

Unfair labor practice refers to management activities affecting unions or union entry. Unfair labor practices are subject to "cease and desist orders" and generally occur under the following situations:

1. Employers attempt to control unions by contributing funds, providing meeting places, distributing company literature, and conducting union business.

2. Management interferes with employee rights to organize, enroll, or help the union. Threats of retaliation, and preventing workers from voting in elections, or asking employees about their union business can be considered unfair labor practices. Management can tell workers about the benefits they get even though there is no union. It is also legal to ban union activity during the work day, in most cases.

3. Employers fire or punish workers because of their union participation except in cases of incompetency or insubordination. Discrimination against union organizers is also judged an unfair labor practice.

4. Labor laws prohibit management from refusing to bargain with employees. It's terribly important that all negotiation are done in "good faith", even when signed contracts take a long time.

There are restrictions on unions as well. Employee groups are considered to be in violation when they take part in the following:

1. Coercion or interference with management in it's assignment of bargaining personnel.

2. Coercion of workers regarding union membership. This also applies to their families.

3. Trying to make management discriminate against workers who support a different union, or a non-union environment.

4. Do not bargain in good faith.

5. Support secondary strikes and boycotts, in some instances.

**Thought for the Day: Tact—the ability to put your best foot forward without stepping on anyone's toes.**

CHAPTER 7

# CONTRACTOR RELATIONS

One of the oldest questions in pupil transportation is, "Should a school district own it's buses or should it contract for the service?" And as old as the question is, just as vague and uncertain is the answer, because there is no universal solution.

It shouldn't be an issue. Rather than spend years in trying to find the answer, the best solution is to consider both sides of the question, apply the answer which best suits the needs of the school district, and put the issue to rest. And because there are so many school districts in this country with so many variables, there are many unique and different situations.

Start with the advantages, and there are many. One is fiscal. In today's economy and in view of increasing costs of new buses, a school district is prudent and wise to do its homework. It should consider its cash situation (and its cash-raising abilities) and look very seriously at going into a contract operation. One reason it should be considered is that in many parts of this country school districts are no longer able to raise additional funds. They do not have this ability that was once vested to them. And the net result of that is the inability to generate the money needed to purchase expensive equipment like school buses.

So they're faced with one of two answers:

1. Contract with a private operator who has to come up with the cash.

2. Defer buying new buses and maintaining them for a longer life. This creates an unsafe situation and forces maintenance costs to go higher and higher. The older the bus, the more it costs to operate. That's a simple, fundamental fact of life; it's no different with a school bus than it is with an airplane or personal car. It's true there are times when it's expedient and wise to delay purchasing equipment and absorb a higher maintenance cost on a short-term basis, but it is not a wise long-term practice . The bus is eventually going to wear out, and if a school district has deferred buying new ones for many years, the balloon effect takes place. They're faced with an overwhelming expenditure of funds. Chances are they won't have that much money, and if they did, the chances are even better that the public won't understand the enormous capital outlay.

How does the district turn this disadvantage into an advantage? What can the school system (the taxpaying public) gain by doing so?

The first benefit is that the contract operator is the person who has to come up with the cash, not the school system. And in today's economy, private companies have much greater means of obtaining capital than do public agencies. California is one of the states in this country in which school districts cannot raise revenue and are dependent on the legislature for its funding. It's a sole-source process, and if Sacramento says no, they have no alternative.

That's not true with independent operators. With a good performance record goes bonding ability and, given any sort of longevity in contracts, most banks and lenders are pleased to lend them money. They also usually can shop for the best interest rate.

An operator can also shop for leasing programs. Many school districts are unable to lease equipment other than on an annual or short-term basis. Not so with contractors; they have the freedom to explore lease options and the opportunity to use equipment in different contracts. A school district cannot do that. A school district, which heretofore was faced with buying buses because of new programs, no longer has the luxury of letting the buses sit idly when the program ends three years later. The district can prudently contract for a two or three year term and be unencumbered with excess equipment and employees at the completion of the contract.

It's true there's a gamble when a contractor undertakes a short-term contract, but that's the risk of business (a characteristic of private industry).

So it is an advantage to a school system in most cases to contract for its school bus service. Why? Finances and service. A viable, safe and efficient contractor, and there are many in the country, can meet the district's needs. True, there are some inefficient private school bus operations, but also true, there are some inefficient public school bus operations. Rather than tolerate an inefficient contractor, the school system that uses good management and monitors the contractor with clean specifications can sleep soundly and be assured that its contractor will be a safe operator and one on which they can depend.

Yet there are some disadvantages, and they can be not only sensitive, but harmful. One of the disadvantages results from the failure of a school system to establish clear and honest specifications. Contracts for school bus service represent service, and that is difficult to spell out and legislate. (A large portion of a school bus contract should address the service requirements.)

Many school districts fail in their preparation of the bid specs. When the specs are clean and legitimate, and have been clarified at pre-bid meetings, everyone goes into the bidding on the same basis. So school districts can ask for whatever they want, as long as they're realistic, and they ask up front.

The weakness of an inadequate contract is its failure to include comprehensive specifications. A contract administrator can't come back in the middle of a contract and try to install procedures that either can't be done or weren't required of the operator in the first place. It's not wrong for a contractor to object to certain things which were not specified two years earlier.

For example, the school district has every right to require pupil delivery times in the morning and school dismissal times in the afternoon for the contractor's buses. The educational programs must be scheduled on time and run on time, both morning and afternoon.

The school district is not out of line to insist on adequate training for every school bus driver. In fact, it would be irresponsible not to do so.

The school system has every right to specify the management organization of the contractor. The school district must require adequate safety standards, driver training, field supervision, safety meetings, and vehicle maintenance standards.

Accidents happen and breakdowns occur under the best of circumstances. No one would be wise to think that this will never happen. On the other hand, one should not take a passive stance and assume that something is going to happen and wait to see how bad it is when it does occur – not at all. A school district must specify the main-

tenance inspections, the time lines for them, the items to be inspected, the follow-up period for repair, and a definite procedure for reporting the results. And, bear in mind, that these are all workable and doable functions of any and every capable contract administrator. These are identifiable needs and must be monitored.

Yes, there is a solution. It rests on specifications and monitoring. It's incumbent on the administrator to establish a working document which allows both parties to serve the educational program and to systematically check it.

Don't forget you're still the boss in a contract system. You're always responsible for the final outcome. If a contractor fails to meet the district specifications, document it. (The minute you stand on personal opinion, you're asking for trouble). Then meet the issue head on, don't sweep it under the rug.

Another important practice is the development of a close relationship between both staff groups. Pupil transportation is a service, not a product. It's a service upon which the school system depends very much. It's a program which is flexible due to changes in the weather, school attendance areas, road conditions, and legislation.

It starts out every morning from scratch. Builders are known for their good works for years, but school bus operators can't rest on their laurels. Because Thursday was a safe day they can't claim that nothing will go wrong Friday. School bus operations start from zero every morning and are judged accordingly.

Pupil transportation can't be fitted into a rigid grid which guarantees that everything's going to work out one, two, three, bang, every day. It will not. Generally it does, but there are too many variables to permit this approach.

Contract administration is a two-way street. The fleet manager who works for the contractor is a contract administrator just like the fleet manager who works for a school system.

This requires a harmonious working relationship between the contractor and the school district, which is not to insist on close friendship. Far from it—that type of friendship can be detrimental to many organizations. But there must be a respectful working relationship between the two. There has to be give and take from both parties, mutual understanding, and the knowledge that inclement weather will make buses run late. The realization that an extra-inning baseball game will delay the buses five minutes is paramount to success. The ability of both sides to recognize this and work with it is the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful operation.

A few words about the extension of existing contracts. These comments refer only to the extension of an existing contract, in no way do they affect the bidding process which must take place when the school district is either unable or unwilling to negotiate an extension.

There's an important distinction between bidding a contract and extending an existing one, it being that the school district must have the opportunity to retain an efficient contractor. School bus service cannot be viewed as one views product manufacturing. One generally cannot buy outstanding service "off the shelf."

School bus contracting is a service, and an operator who provides good service must have the opportunity of continuing under additional contracts with the school system. Astute business people can make reasonably accurate decisions when they're confident they can retain the contract, given their provision of good service, and the

recognition by the school district that they have performed creditably and acceptably.

Remember, school buses cost a great deal of money, a conventional unit costs over $35,000 now. Land and terminal facilities are suffering from inflation, as is much of the rest of the equipment one buys these days. As a result, these considerations must be viewed on a longer term than is the practice of many school systems today. Large investments simply cannot be made for a one or two year period. So, the ability to extend the contract is paramount.

Many school districts are recognizing that contractors should not amortize a $35,000 bus over a two or three year contract. If they do, the school district prices are going to be disproportionately high. Remember that most contractors simply cannot come in and put up a hundred-bus facility for a two year contract, and stand the risk of losing it on a re-bid for a few cents a day.

Many states are encouraging and permitting school districts to renegotiate contracts. New York, for example, permits extensions of contracts up to ten years, and they're very candid about it; the legislature recognized that school bus operators can amortize their costs more realistically over a longer period of time. It's important that this practice increase throughout the country. At the least it should be considered by school districts.

On the other hand, in Alaska you cannot extend a contract; when it ends it must be re-bid. This is restrictive for incumbent contractors who have met the first criterion; safe, excellent service. Even though school districts might be perfectly happy, pleased, and satisfied with their performance, they don't have the opportunity to extend the contract.

There are several other significant reasons why the contract extension is important. A short-term bid requires a lot of start-up costs, and no matter how you cut the cake, these costs have to be recovered. Simple arithmetic; if it's a three-year bid, they have to be written off over the three-year period. If it's a five-year bid, they're spread on that basis.

Many operators throughout the country look at a contract on a long-term basis. They're willing to take a reduced profit margin over a long period as opposed to being forced into a short-term environment; and lower profits mean lower costs for the school district.

The opportunity to negotiate an extension permits the financial people to consider amortizing the costs over a longer period of time – but by no means can the extension process be unilateral. It cannot be at the whim of one of the two parties. It must be an opportunity based on the contractor having provided good service, and that there is an open forum in which to come to agreement. Never can the agreements be based on one party's acceptance or denial of the process, nor should there be an absolute ban against extending a contract.

The people the contractor uses on behalf of the school district is another consideration (everything we ever talk about in pupil transportation begins with the fact that people are the most important ingredient of the program). Regardless of the type of operation, be it home-to-school, special education, or field trips, the most important thing is the management and the drivers; the men and women on whom the children depend.

Bear in mind that long term contracts provide long term employment. They permit employees to work in a more relaxed mode, and to perform better. And that's not

unique to school bus operations; it's true in any company. It's difficult, if not impossible, to attract good management people when there's a danger that the company will lose the two-year contract. It's also difficult to train and retrain people. It's hard for employees to maintain a sense of stability when the threat of a biannual contract comes up. The freedom to extend contracts has a direct relationship with good management, good drivers, good staff, and ultimately, the children.

Another negative impact of short term contract rebidding is the in-service safety program. This is not to say that contractors who are on a one year basis wouldn't have adequate safety programs, but it is to say that given a stable work force, it's to the advantage of children and the school district to have long term contracts.

Most employees recognize that the longer they work and the more experience they develop, the better worker they are. And while you don't measure service on a quantitative basis in the school bus business, you do measure safety standards.

One other very important consideration in this discussion is the index of driver's salaries in contracts. Throughout the country, driver's wages make up anywhere from 50 to 70 percent of the contract. This is an asset in a long term contract because it means you can retain the same good people about whom we earlier talked, and you can attract good people. It also means that the school district benefits from these seasoned and proficient employees. In a corollary, the opposite becomes a negative and a deficiency.

When you're in a short term contract and you are bidding every year, you are attracting competition, the basis of our country's economy. Competition is one of the

things that's made this country great, and we need it on a rational basis. On the other hand, over competition can be negative and destructive.

In a short term bidding war, competition degrades the very target that school districts are looking for; a high level of service on a safe basis. The area of driver's wages is the only real source that people can compromise in a bidding war. Remember, wages are 70 percent of the contract: 30 percent is in fixed overhead costs: fuel, shop equipment, buses, building rental, taxes, insurance, telephone, electricity, and water. There isn't much tolerance in this 30 percent. One might find some tax depreciation, or equipment leasing terms which give a little edge over the competition, but, practically speaking, the 30 percent is pretty constant for everyone who submits a bid.

What's left to adjust? Drivers' salaries. There's no question that one can make the argument in some areas that people are overpaid. In some cases it's true, but the greater threat is the scenario in which people are underpaid because the operator wants to win the bid. And when they're underpaid, rest assured that you're going to find it difficult, if not impossible, to attract dependable personnel with whom everyone wants their children to ride. Money doesn't buy everything, but it has to be the fair and equitable index by which we operate. There is a point at which the competitive process prevents attracting good people. By submitting a too-low bid, based on a too-low salary scale, one simply cannot attract and/or retain the type of person the school district and the operator need for a safe and successful operation.

Low price is not everything. Low price generally turns out to be high price when one considers a higher accident rate, higher insurance rates, poor home-to-school service,

and unreliable field trips. While these four factors are not easily quantified, they are very real considerations. They are valid. A school district must consider them in its philosophy about bidding, and, more importantly, its philosophy about extending contracts.

So there is a built in threat to efficiency and safety when a school district maintains a practice of short term bidding.

Problems occur when people view pupil transportation as an equipment business. It's not. It's a people based service program. Close harmony and a good working relationship make it a good, safe, and dependable operation. When one looks at it from this viewpoint, it's not difficult to negotiate extensions based on the two criteria which are outlined in this chapter.

In summary, a school district must reserve the option of extending contracts. It must keep this mode open, and give a contractor a confident environment in which to operate. The contractor must meet the specifications and perform to the satisfaction of the school district, nothing can change this. But given that these standards are achieved, the district must allow the contractor the opportunity to continue to serve it.

**Thought for the Day: Cooperation is spelled with two letters – WE.**

CHAPTER 8

# THE FIRST STEP

Where does safety begin? With the driver's seat belt? The eight inch stop and brake light lens? Or is it in the classroom with the six year olds when their teacher explains the behavior expected of them when they ride to the museum.

Safety rests with these factors, but it doesn't begin with them. Safety starts at the first step.

The first step in safety is 15 inches above the ground. It's the first step Mrs. Brown makes as she enters her yellow school bus.

Mrs. Brown is a school bus driver. Twice a day, every morning and every afternoon, she drives while 150 boys and girls ride to and from school. Mrs. Brown sees every one.

Sixty are elementary children. Every day, she wipes their noses, ties their shoe laces, and sorts caps and mittens. Fifty of her kids are junior high school students. Announcing unclaimed textbooks, assigning front bus seats, and expecting the unexpected are a daily routine. Forty high school young adults meet Mrs. Brown each day. College, job opportunities, and the prom fill the air in semi-adult tones within the bus.

A typical day? Partly. What else could Mrs. Brown encounter as she drives her bus? Well, try these out for size. Hundreds of anonymous motorists, narrow streets,

cars parked too close to corners, dogs, and younger brothers and children.

A common characteristic among thousands of faceless auto drivers is their compelling anxiety to avoid following Mrs. Brown's bus. While moving, yes. Stopped, no. Wait an extra ten minutes for a World Series game? Sure. Wait 45 seconds for three six year olds to be seated on Mrs. Brown's bus? Never!

Ninety-six inches is an average household drapery width. What a curtain raiser when Mrs. Brown drives her 96 inch wide bus on a narrow street with cars parked on each side.

Power steering is standard equipment on most cars. Mrs. Brown needs it, plus a little extra, when she pilots her 33 foot bus around corners which have cars illegally parked in the restricted zones.

"Why don't you go down to the bus stop to meet your sister? Be careful when you cross the street." A safety-conscious mother talking to her five-year-old pre-schooler? Yes, but she neglected to tell him to stand back from the curb as Mrs. Brown brings her bus to a stop. So, now Mrs. Brown has to worry about the preschoolers.

A typical day? Partly. What else does Mrs. Brown consider as she drives her bus?

Mrs. Brown's three children are students. One in college and two in high school. How many parents must consider typical domestic issues? Homesickness in college, a date for the next prom, and spring wardrobes for the kids. Are you worried about income tax time? Probably. So is Mrs. Brown. High tax rates on real estate, new zoning around the corner, and central air-conditioning in the house require attention in many households.

When to activate the red flashing lights on her bus when approaching the bus stop takes all of Mrs. Brown's thoughts. Her bus meets the kids halfway through their community. Going through narrow streets leaves little room for her bus, and no room for any thoughts about income taxes.

Is your income turning the corner toward carpeting, air-conditioning, and the country club? Mrs. Brown must turn many corners without thinking of any of these realities of life.

With dogs and babies, Mrs. Brown can't think of her own—she's concentrating on everyone else's safety.

Attitude determines the correct driving habits and performance of Mrs. Brown. Her attitude establishes the high level of safe transportation which every youngster receives as they ride her bus.

Mrs. Brown gets help on the bus from her seat belt, her Class A turn signals, and the padded instrument panel, but limited help is all she gets. The real help she gets is her own alert attitude.

Safety for every child rests on Mrs. Brown. She starts their day with the first step. Safety for every child starts on the first step. Safety on the bus starts and ends with Mrs. Brown.

**Thought for the Day: Some people learn the traffic laws by accident.**

## DRIVER SUPERVISION

School bus fleets play a great role in supporting our school systems. Safe and efficient fleet operation requires

driving that is under the control of dedicated men and women. This control is spread among many people, drivers, trainers, managers, and administrators, each of whom contributes to success. One of the overlooked facets of a viable safety program is the retraining part. The training of school bus drivers does not end when they receive their license and start their first assignment. It's just beginning. One important means of helping drivers improve is through field supervision.

Management supervision is more than holding driver safety meetings and sending memos. These are necessary, but there is more to good administration than these two functions. Bear in mind that drivers spend most of their working days by themselves, so they need the periodic supervision of a field trainer, a person who rides with the drivers on their regular routes, and conducts in-service training. Even the best drivers need recognition, and they get it when the field supervisor rides with them. Even the best drivers develop faulty habits because they are by themselves so much, and they receive retraining when the field supervisor rides with them. Incidentally, these faulty habits don't show up in the safety meetings, one reason being that the drivers don't realize they're occurring.

Field supervision is an integral part of the overall safety program and must be conducted on the same basis as the budget analysis—systematic and planned. It can't be operated on an "as needed" basis. It's too late to ride with a driver after an accident, so when this is treated as an adjunct to the safety program, it's flawed.

Another benefit of the systematic mode is the motivation of the drivers. All of us want to be appreciated and recognized, and drivers (most of them) want someone to be with them and see the good things that go on everyday.

Truly, there are many noble actions that drivers and aides perform, but who sees them? People take pride in their work, and appreciate being recognized. When field supervision is handled on a positive basis, it can be highly motivating.

It can't be a negative process, because this attitude will make employees suspicious and uneasy, and this can lead to a lack of safety. No one ever makes true progress in a negative environment. The supervisor must be quick to praise the driver in public, but retrain in private.

Employees earn, deserve, and need an award system. The colloquial reward in our society is money, but there are other bonuses, and successful administrators use them. Personal recognition, accepting and implementing suggestions, and the opportunity for promotion are motivational tools.

Formal awards should not be restricted to safe driving, although that is the primary function of the field supervision effort. Recognition of faithful and dedicated service, special actions, and unique personal contributions, is excellent motivation for employees.

Furthermore, when out in the field the supervisor is able to stay abreast of daily conditions, changes, and real life situations of students. This benefits the drivers, staff, the school system, and parents by meeting the main goal – safety.

The most important attitude that an administrator can communicate to drivers is that every day countless boys and girls' safety depends on them, and without them the educational program would suffer.

**Thought for the Day: When you must criticize, suggest an improvement rather than find a fault.**

## ACCIDENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

The safe transportation of children is every administrator's highest priority. Everything else is subordinate, and the drivers must always be conscious of it.

The drivers control the destiny of the operation. Their safe driving performances provide youngsters a safe, confident bus ride, and their attitude towards safety determines the success or failure of the program. But attitude is multifaceted and must be shared by the administrator, the staff, and the system. In reality, the inspiration and initiation of a strong, viable program has to come from management. It sets the standard. When management portrays a true devotion to safety and sets high standards, drivers will do the same. On the other hand, if management doesn't show a total commitment, the employees will sense it and follow the same pattern. So while everyone must share the responsibility, the impetus has to come from the leader. That's what leaders are for.

One of the components of safe driving deserves special attention, and should be used by every administrator as an educational and inspirational tool for employees. It is the Accident Education Committee.

Regardless of the training and retraining platform a system has, and in spite of everyone's best efforts, accidents will happen. There simply are too many variables and too many factors over which the drivers have no control. So it's not a question of wondering if they will occur, but how to treat them when they do.

Top administrators emphasize the educational, positive side of an accident. They create the atmosphere in which employees learn – one in which reasons and causes are understood by the drivers, trainers, and mechanics. The more people learn about their involvement in an accident, the less chance there is of repeating it.

**NOTE**

> Involvement in an accident need not imply guilt. On the contrary, many are a party to an accident but didn't cause it and couldn't prevent it. So they were involved, but they didn't "have an accident."

The Accident Education Committee is a group of peers whose responsibilities include:

1. Reviewing and analyzing all accident reports.
2. Meeting with drivers to discuss their explanations.
3. Explaining the committee's analysis of the accident.
4. Teaching the driver the reasons for the accident.
5. Determining the preventability, non-preventability, or non-determinable outcome of the accident.
6. Encouraging the drivers.
7. Maintaining a high level of concern about daily safety.

The spirit of the committee is the foremost factor. It must be positive, empathic, and instructional in its entire function. It's not a witch-hunt, nor can it be conducted in a "second guessing" manner. When the spirit represents a dedication about safety, employees will respond in kind.

Their commitment to improvement and learning will result in the attitude an administrator needs for a healthy organization. Which leads to safety for children.

The committee must consist of:

1. Drivers
2. Driver trainer(s)
3. Staff member(s)
4. Law enforcement personnel (optional)
5. Union representative (optional)
6. Insurance representative (optional)
7. Public safety officer (optional)

The committee meets on a scheduled basis. It should be systematic in its manner, including the frequency of meetings. Need determines regularity, and it cannot be operated as an after-the-fact occurrence. Don't have meetings when they're unnecessary, but don't let this program be a stepchild, either.

**Thought for the Day: Correction does much; encouragement does more.**

## SAFETY FIRST, LAST, AND ALWAYS

Everyone learns at a different pace, so the training varies with individuals. Fundamentals don't change, though, and every trainer needs some basic guidelines. Drivers also need them, especially inexperienced ones.

### Driving Hints

When starting your bus, be sure to put the bus in neutral and depress the clutch until the motor has started,

then release the clutch and allow the motor to warm up, at a fast idle, for at least ten minutes.

Always keep a check on the dashboard, checking the gauges, making sure everything is working properly.

Always keep both hands on the wheel, except when actually shifting gears, so you will have the best possible control of your bus.

You cannot shift gears on a bus too often, but you can easily not shift as often as you should; don't let the motor labor. Shift when you feel the bus is losing power and not by the speedometer.

Speed limit for a school bus is a legal determination, yet speed for conditions, like driving on wet roads, fog, etc., is more important than the speed limit.

Come to a smooth, easy stop at all times unless it is an emergency.

Leave bus in neutral at stop lights, to eliminate the possibility of your foot slipping off the clutch and causing an accident.

When going through an intersection where you did not have to stop for a traffic light or stop sign, take your foot off the gas pedal and place it on the brake pedal, so you will be ready for any emergency.

When making a turn where it is necessary to change gears, always change gears either before you turn or after you turn.

With a school bus you do not have any special privileges. Obey all traffic laws.

If you are late for any reason, you are just late. Never

try to make up any time. It is better to explain why you are late than to explain an accident.

Do not ride the clutch. Never coast or cut off the engine. Do not disengage the clutch except when coming to a stop.

When driving on ice or snow, use lower gears for better braking power, such as fourth in place of fifth. When going down grade and you use a lower gear, such as third, for braking power, shift into third while still on level ground, before you start down the grade. In going up grade, you should shift into the lowest gear that is necessary to shift back to in dry weather to complete the grade, doing so on level ground before you start up the grade.

Never follow too closely. Always allow plenty of room between yourself and the vehicle ahead.

Always use turn signals when turning or changing lanes.

Keep a check at all times on traffic. Let your eyes roam. Get the full picture – in front, rear, and both sides, by using your mirrors, so you will be ready for any emergency. Drive defensively.

Keep a check at all times for road hazards, such as leaning mail boxes, street and traffic signs. Watch, also, for utility repairs and low hanging tree branches, etc.

On narrow roads where there are blind curves, sound your horn repeatedly at each curve, so anyone on the other side will be aware of your presence.

Only back your bus, when necessary, at regular designated turnaround points, and parking when you have completed your run. Never back at any other time unless there

is no way out, and then only if you have a responsible person to watch the rear of the bus.

### Making A Right Turn

Look intersection over as you approach for telephone poles, leaning mail boxes, street and traffic signs, etc., so nothing will come as a surprise to you as you are making your turn.

Stay away from the edge of the road to allow turning room, yet do not allow enough room for a small car to get between you and the edge of the road.

If it is necessary to swing to the left to make the right turn, be sure to check your left mirror before you swing out. Make sure you block the right side of the road with the rear of your bus, so no one can pull up on the right side. Check your right mirror for clearance as you turn. The center of the bus is the first part that will make contact.

If it is necessary to use the left side of the road into which you are turning to complete your right turn, and a vehicle is on the left side, come to a complete stop at the divider. Do not back up, as a car can get close enough behind you that it cannot be seen in your mirrors. Wait until traffic is clear and complete your right turn.

### Making A Left Turn

Look intersection over, as you approach, for any unusual conditions, such as painting of divider lines, safety walk lines, utility repairs, etc.

Stay close to the divider, so you will be in the proper lane for a left turn and no one can pass without violating the law.

Watch for vehicle on left stopped for red light, partially blocking intersection.

As you are making your left turn, be sure to check the left mirror, making sure everything is clear. Remember the center of the bus is the first thing that will drag on anything. If it appears, after checking your left mirror, that you are going to drag a vehicle partially blocking the intersection, stop—do not back up, as a car can get close enough behind you that it cannot be seen in your mirrors. Let the other vehicle back up, then complete your left turn.

### Going Through A Road Hazard

Stop back far enough so that you can square your bus for the opening, looking over the amount of room you have.

Pull up to the opening, and if it still looks close, come to a full stop, put the bus in second gear and proceed slowly, checking the front and both of your side mirrors, making sure you don't drag the sides of the bus on anything.

Make sure you go through the opening, you do not cut back to the right side of the road, as if you are driving a car. You must glide back to the right side, checking your right mirror, because you can drag the right side of the bus.

### Passing A Vehicle

As you prepare to pass, use your turn signal and look the conditions over before passing.

As you are passing, do not cut back to your right as you would with a car. You must glide back to your right, check-

ing your right mirror, making sure you do not drag the center of your bus on the vehicle you are passing.

### Curved Roads

When driving on a curved road, you must look for telephone poles, leaning mail boxes, etc. For if you drive on the edge of the black top, as you would with a car, you will drag the center of the bus.

### Starting On A Hill

Starting on a hill, you must make sure you do not drift back. The way to start is to keep your right foot tight on the foot brake, and do not try to make a move until you are sure you have the gear lever into starting gear, for sometimes it is hard to put the gear lever into gear. Then release the clutch pedal and at the same time, depress the accelerator, speeding up the engine enough to overcome the hill. If you stall your bus, keep your right foot tight on the foot brake and your foot on the clutch, keeping it depressed, then start the motor; if you find that you have to give it some gas, use the hand throttle, setting it at a fast idle. After the motor has started, leave the hand throttle set at the fast idle until you have started moving.

### Ventilation

Always have the ventilator window open for safety from carbon monoxide fumes.

## HINTS FOR GENERAL OPERATION

Use the clearance lights and dim headlights any time you have poor visibility, such as dark, overcast skies, rain, snow, etc. regardless of the time of day.

In the operation of the red blinkers, you must turn them on at least 100 feet before you stop, as a warning you are going to stop, either to load or unload your bus.

Always leave the bus in neutral when loading and unloading to eliminate the possibility of your foot slipping off the clutch and causing an accident or personal injury.

At a designated turnaround point – in the morning, you pick the students up first, then turn around; in the evening, you turn around first, then let the students off. In the evening, all students who must cross the road are to cross in front of the bus.

The students meet the bus – the bus does not meet the students. It is better to run a little late than a little early. Always tell the students to be at their bus stop ten minutes earlier than the time you will be there. Don't wait for anyone who is not at the stop on time. If you do wait for someone who is running a little late, wait just as if they were standing at the stop when you first arrived. Do not make a move to close the door until you are ready to leave.

As you load your bus in the morning, make sure all students sit down. Allow no one to stand until all seats are taken. At no time is anyone to stand past the stanchions, or sit on the steps, heater, etc. Only the driver operates the front door at all times. At the afternoon dismissal when the students are boarding the bus, you must make sure you are there to supervise the loading of the bus.

The students are to load and unload by the front door only; the rear door is for an emergency only.

If you leave your bus for any reason, always take the key with you except when you park after completing your run.

In the event of an accident, turn the key off to eliminate a possible fire, and take the key with you so no one can move the bus but you. Take care of any injured persons, calling an ambulance, if necessary. Do not admit any guilt, only answer necessary questions asked by the investigating police officer. If you have an accident, I hope you are in the right, but don't have an accident just because you are right. Drive defensively.

In dealing with students, treat all students alike. Remember to be fair and impartial, treating them the same as you would want a bus driver to treat your own children, as each student is a piece of gold to someone.

If you have any disciplinary problems, such as refusal to sit down, leaving by the rear door, throwing things, too much noise, etc., have a talk with the students. The best time to do this is in the morning at the school where you normally unload. If it becomes necessary to speak to the students, as you stop at school in the morning, ask them to keep their seats. Turn your motor off, and stand up facing the students to tell them how their actions interfere with the safe operation of the bus; that it could cause them personal injury, and even their very life. If, after talking to the students in a group, you still have the same problems with two or three of the students, when you stop at the school in the morning, let all the students off and keep the two or three on the bus, and speak to them alone. If this does not correct the problem, report them to the principal for any disciplinary action the principal may see fit. Also report the conditions to your supervisor.

You do not have the right to put anyone off the bus. This decision is for the principal or your supervisor only. But you do have the right to make the students sit anywhere on the bus that you designate. For example, if

someone seems to cause trouble when he is sitting in the rear of the bus, you can make the student sit up front.

It is the driver's duty to keep the bus clean, inside and outside.

**SCHOOL BUS DRIVER PERFORMANCE SHEET**

This is to certify that is, is not qualified for employment by the as a school bus operator. This qualification is rated for the following vehicle(s):

1. Station wagon _____
2. Thirty-six passenger bus _____
3. Fifty or sixty passenger bus _____
4. Transit-type pusher bus _____
5. Special Education Van _____ ____

He, she is also qualified as a substitute bus driver. This qualification is rated in the following categories:

Full time substitution ____ Supervised substitution ____

TOTAL hours in training _____

_____ Driver Trainer
Transportation Department

CHAPTER 9

# ROUTING AND SCHEDULING

There are two fundamental criteria which the administrator must always focus on:

1. Safety of the routes
2. Efficiency of scheduling

## ROUTING

Routing of stops: every planner must try to minimize the time students are on the bus. The less time they're riding, the less exposure they have to vehicular traffic and accidents. The planner's goal is to send the bus out empty and return it full. Where possible, one should prevent having the driver pick up pupils on the way out to the furthest stop, then pass the same location as they return to school. One-way streets, railroad crossings, and traffic patterns sometimes prohibit the ideal situation, but the planner should strive for it. The same principle applies in the afternoon. Get the kids off the bus as soon as possible.

Another consideration--less discipline problems come with shorter riding time (usually).

Route safety - every aspect of the route demands careful planning and scrutiny. Local situations will again require local judgments, and each one deserves individual attention. Yet there are similar conditions all route planners must consider, and these are:

1. Bus stop locations
   a. adequate vision for the bus driver

   b. adequate sight distance for motorists in all directions
   c. a safe waiting space for the children
   d. hills
   e. curves
   f. trees

2. Traffic patterns
   a. permit the bus to leave and enter traffic safely
   b. consider pedestrians at senior citizen centers, health clinics, and private schools. Their schedules might conflict with the buses.

All have a significant effect on a bus stop location.

Elementary school children generally cannot walk as far as high school students, so more frequent stops should be established for them. Closer together and closer to their homes.

Administrators and planners need:

1. Route descriptions for each bus
2. Trip descriptions for each bus
3. Bus mileage (daily)
   a. live mileage (with pupils)
   b. dead mileage (without pupils)
4. Bus operating hours (daily)
   a. live hours (with pupils)
   b. dead hours (without pupils)
5. Passenger capacities by trip
6. Bus stop pickup and discharge times
7. Bus stop pickup and discharge odometer readings
8. Distance between bus stops and schools

9. Bus traveling time between bus stops and school
10. Special program data
    a. field trips
    b. athletic trips
    c. charter trips
11. Local data needs as appropriate

Good managers don't depend on maps unless they know they're accurate. They're careful of paper streets, missing bridges, and corners which drivers can't make. They ride buses on their regular routes, walk the same paths the students do, and personally observe traffic conditions.

## SCHEDULING

Bus and school schedules – there is a distinct correlation between school bus schedules and school schedules, and all administrators must utilize the relationship as effectively as possible, keeping in mind that the scheduling of the school bus fleet must be a supplement to the basic function of the school, which is to teach children.

Furthermore, the policy of the administrator must be to keep pupil transportation to a minimum. New schools should be located, whenever possible, to reduce or minimize the number of students to be transported. When it is necessary to provide bus service, the policy of the scheduler is to:

1. Have the students on the buses as little as possible.
2. Bring them to school just before school opens and take them home at dismissal.

This policy would be of little value if one conducted a fleet of school buses solely on a fiscal basis. Finances

alone should not determine the operation of the school bus fleet. All facets of a public school program are dependent upon tax revenues, with the greatest portion of a school budget devoted to instruction. Buildings must be heated, lighted, and maintained, planning for future needs must anticipate growth patterns, and means to provide pupils a way to school must be available. With a limit to the expense the public will support, it behooves a school administration to operate the supporting services as efficiently as possible. Every dollar saved in the operation of the school bus fleet means another dollar diverted to the curriculum.

What impact does a variable school day have on the cost of pupil transportation? A lot.

The significant consideration is that a variable school day schedule results in greater utilization of a school bus. The greater the range of school opening and closing times, the more efficiency the administrator can realize from labor and vehicle costs. And these two categories are where the money is.

School bus fleets can be compared to a commuter train system. All available equipment and personnel must be utilized during the peak load hours. Likewise with a school bus fleet, it's only during these hours that any great use is derived from the school buses. During the school day, school buses and commuter trains are generally under utilized.

Obviously, if the peak load hours can be extended, the use of the school bus fleet can be expanded. Several factors must be taken into consideration with respect to extending the use of the school bus fleet:

1. Any change in the bus scheduling affects the schools which the buses serve.

2. All changes made must be with the intent to improve existing conditions, not merely to make a change.

3. The scheduling of the school bus fleet must be a supplement to the basic function of the school.

4. The scheduling of the school hours in relation to the bus fleet must not be controlled by the buses themselves. As important as the school bus is to a school, it must remain supportive to the education program. Cafeteria services, plant operations, maintenance, and administration all contribute to the daily conduct of the school. None, however, is a primary function of education. Any other thought is a supplement to this principle.

The school bus must be an adjunct and an aid to the daily operation of the school. It is the relationship of the bus schedules to the school hours which is so important and under so much influence by the transportation administrator.

If changing the daily hours of a school to reduce bus costs interferes with an efficient educational program or presents a handicap to children, by no means should the school hours be changed. If a change does not interfere with the educational atmosphere of a school and is no handicap to students, then the reduction of transportation costs is a benefit.

The bus fleet is a service provider. Its sole function is to supplement the educational program in a safe, efficient mode. It cannot control the school system, it must serve it. One of the frequent problems an administrator encounters is the feeling of educators and lay people that "transportation runs the system." It shouldn't, but it must

be as effective as possible. An administrator must walk a fine line between the two efforts and draw on salesmanship to point out the service/efficiency results of creative scheduling.

Opening and ending school times – get the students to school at the last reasonable time in the morning and be waiting for them at dismissal – a must for every scheduler. The benefits:

1. Students are not milling around the school buildings/grounds any more than necessary, especially in the afternoon when they're tired.

2. Safer dismissal procedures. It is far safer for students to be dismissed and board a waiting bus and, after a specified loading time, be driven home. It is dangerous when buses drive into school loading zones and driveways to be met by running, impatient students (especially junior high). Drivers have no control over them.

3. A prompt afternoon dismissal. When all the buses are parked, waiting for the students in the afternoon, the school/transportation administrators can determine the appropriate time at which all the buses will depart. This controls traffic flow, can prevent parents and students from driving through milling pupils, and minimizes the length of time pupils are around the buildings after school (which most teachers and staff appreciate).

There are many methods by which a scheduler coordinates bus trips, routes, and school schedules. There is no one means. Maps, pins, string, plastic overlays, microcomputer software programs, and mainframe computers, are examples of valid means. While the practices vary, the necessary data needs are the same everywhere.

One of the criteria of budget control is a periodic

analysis and reconciliation of the costs. Bus routes and schedules demand the same review. "No news is not always good news," and the administrator must frequently scrutinize the routes and schedules for:

1. On time arrivals at stops and schools
2. On time departures at stops and school
3. Bus seating capacities and pupil loads.
4. Live time factor for each trip
5. Live mileage factor for each trip
6. Fuel consumption related to vehicle age and capacity
7. Driver hours/overtime.
8. Maintenance and repair costs related to vehicle age and capacity
9. Maintenance and repair costs as related to driver competence
10. Pupil discipline
    a. bus riding time
    b. pickup time, both morning and afternoon
        1. pupil age
        2. pupil experience
        3. pupil personality

**NOTE**

An ideal utilization of the bus is a 50 percent live time and mileage factor.

Many systems permit their drivers to park their buses at home overnight. The public often asks about this practice, especially from a cost standpoint. The answer gen-

erally falls within the statement, "anyplace on the circle is equidistant." The mileage (fuel consumption) is the same, whether a driver goes home empty after the morning route or whether she goes out empty to the first morning stop. The reversal of the afternoon makes no difference.

The foundation of efficient, cost productive transportation is routing and scheduling. The full utilization of buses and drivers minimizes expenses, and provides support to the educational program. This is a great combination, and every administrator who meets these goals can be happy and satisfied.

**Thought for the Day: Chisholm's Law—Anytime things appear to be going better, you've overlooked something.**

NAME _____

MONTH _____

MONTHLY SUMMARY SHEET

| Bus # | Trips /Day | Trips /Day | Trips /Day | Trips /Day | Total Pupils | Regular Pupils | Kdgn. Pupils | Program Pupils | Total Daily Miles | Total Daily Hours |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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PUPIL TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

DRIVER MANIFEST

DATE: _____
(month) (day) (year)

DRIVER _____ BUS NO. _____

Bus parking location: _____

School bus operator's license no. _____ Expiration date _____

Driver's social security number _____

Odometer reading at beginning of the month: _____

| | School | Elementary Pupils | Jr.High 7-8-9 | Sr.High 10-11-12 | Parochial Pupils |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | |
| 4. | | | | | |
| 5. | | | | | |
| 6. | | | | | |
| | Totals: | | | | |

*trips per day _____

* a load of students taken from home to school is one-half a trip, and taken from school back home is another one-half trip.

DAILY SCHOOL BUS OPERATING MANIFEST

_____ _____ _____
date parking lot number/location bus/vehicle number

A.M.

Pre-inspection time _____

Beginning odometer _____ (no tenths)

Beginning time _____

Ending odometer _____ (no tenths)

Ending time _____

Total Mileage _____

Total hours of run _____

---

KINDERGARTEN

Beginning odometer _____ (no tenths)

Beginning time _____

Ending odometer _____ (no tenths)

Ending time _____

Total mileage _____

Total hours of run _____

---

P.M.

Beginning odometer _____ (no tenths)

beginning time _____

Ending odometer _____ (no tenths)

Ending time _____

Total mileage _____

Total hours of run _____

| | |
|---|---|
| TOTAL DAILY MILEAGE _____ | TOTAL DAILY HOURS _____ (NEAREST 1/4 HOUR) |

DAILY SCHOOL BUS OPERATING MANIFEST

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

_____ _____ _____
date parking lot number/location bus/vehicle number

NAME OF PROGRAM _____

Beginning odometer (no tenths) _____ Beginning time _____

Ending odometer (no tenths) _____ Ending time _____

Total mileage _____ Total hours of run _____

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Beginning odometer (no tenths) _____ Beginning time _____

Ending odometer (no tenths) _____ Ending time _____

Total mileage _____ Total hours of run _____

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Beginning odometer (no tenths) _____ Beginning time _____

Ending odometer _____ Ending time _____

Total mileage _____ Total hours of run _____

| TOTAL DAILY MILEAGE _____ | TOTAL DAILY HOURS _____ |
|---|---|

Driver's name _____ number of pupils for each trip. _____

USE ONE MANIFEST FOR EACH PROGRAM. PLEASE ASK FOR MORE MANIFESTS WHEN NEEDED.

THE SECTION BELOW RELATES ONLY TO THE TIME AND MILEAGE WHEN PUPILS ARE ON BUS.

| | time | name of place or school | odometer reading | miles |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. First trip (a.m.) | | | | |
| 1. first pupil picked up | | | | |
| 2. arrive at school | | | | |
| B. Second trip (a.m.) | | | | |
| 1. first pupil picked up | | | | |
| 2. arrive at school | | | | |
| C. Third trip (a.m.) | | | | |
| 1. first pupil picked up | | | | |
| 2. arrive at school | | | | |
| D. Fourth trip (a.m.) | | | | |
| 1. first pupil picked up | | | | |
| 2. arrive at school | | | | |
| E. Fifth trip (a.m.) | | | | |
| 1. first pupil picked up | | | | |
| 2. arrive at school | | | | |
| F. Sixth trip (a.m.) | | | | |
| 1. first pupil picked up | | | | |
| 2. arrive at school | | | | |
| G. Noon run | | | | |
| 1. first pupil picked up | | | | |
| 2. arrive at school | | | | |
| H. Noon run | | | | |
| 1. leave school | | | | |
| 2. last pupil discharged | | | | |

SCHOOL BUS TIME SCHEDULE

Driver: _____ School: _____

Date: _____ Bus No: _____

Time leaving from bus lot or school: A.M. _____ P.M. _____

| Time At Stop - A.M. | Name/Location Of Stop | No. of Students | Time At Stop - P.M. |
|---|---|---|---|
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TOTAL: _____

Arrival time at school: _____ Leave school P.M.: _____

Please record ALL times to the nearest minute.

• Put P.M. time opposite A.M. time regardless of stop sequence.

CHAPTER 10

# THE ROLE OF THE COMPUTER

Let there be no doubt, the role of the computer is significant in the school bus profession. There is a definite need for computer assistance in virtually every part of the program. We are currently in the beginning of the new era in transportation regarding the values and results of computer assistance. This help takes various forms, in different shades and at different speeds, but the depth and breadth of the utilization has not even been realized yet. We're just beginning; and we're starting with two applications throughout the industry.

One, the increasing recognition that a computer is not an ogre, nor is it a threat to an organization. On the contrary, it's a tremendous assistance to the chief administrator of a school bus fleet.

Two, the increasing presence of the microcomputer; not only in pupil transportation, but every feature of our daily lives.

This chapter will deal with two principle categories in computerization:

1. The comprehensive mainframe computer for large systems.

2. Use of a microcomputer for school districts, contractors, and any system with one or more facilities or fifteen or more buses.

The microcomputer is a brand new tool that can be brought into each school district and right to the operat-

ing level at each bus terminal. Therein lies one of the new capabilities of the computer. In the past only the mainframe program was adaptable. It was, and is, cost effective only to large school systems. By no means could a district operating thirty, forty buses, and less, utilize the mainframe program. Things have changed. The microcomputer program is a blessing to contractors, school districts, and to operations which are scattered among two or more terminals. There are numerous benefits, all of which this chapter will address. But, do not discriminate between the benefits because of the size of the program. A microcomputer is simply a smaller mainframe. The benefits are available in both systems; the difference is merely cost and speed.

There are three major areas to which a computer avails itself in pupil transportation:

1. Student transportation
2. Pupil enrollment analysis
3. School redistricting

Let's outline those things in which a computer is invaluable and a great help to the Director of Transportation.

1. School bus routing
2. School bus scheduling
3. Vehicle maintenance (including the truck fleet)
4. School bus stop analysis
5. School bus daily miles
   a. daily miles with pupils
   b. daily miles without pupils

6. School bus daily minutes
   a. daily minutes with pupils
   b. daily minutes without pupils

Live miles and live time are significantly important management tools. Every administrator should depend very much on these items and needs this data to make professional judgments regarding route efficiencies.

The computer, in tabulating the stop analysis and automatically making these calculations, is not a threat to the routing program. Nor is it a threat to the administrator's routing ability. It's an asset. With its multi million megabyte capacity, a computer can make these calculations in a few minutes as opposed to hours and weeks of labor by the transportation staff. Given the proper input and accurate information, the computer is peerless regarding school bus routing and the analysis of time and mileage. When you first build a computerized route, road check it after it's completed, and continue to do so, until you're comfortable with the results.

**REMINDER**

> Make backup copies of all your work. Do it every day. It's heartbreaking to lose all your hard work because of an electrical failure or mistake.

Teach your staff to operate your microcomputers. New technology can be frightening, but training and practice overcome the fear. Computers are actually easy, but people have to practice on them. It's rewarding to see an employee grow confident and capable with new tools.

Furthermore, the database handles the determination of school opening and closing schedules. This is one of the

most sensitive aspects of the program, one about which every layman can make a judgment. Without question, the computer is a most important necessity. It can accurately correlate your delivery times and your pickup times, which provide the best utilization of every school bus.

The next item is efficiency. The mainframe computer will automatically load the buses, based on the geographic pupil locations, pupil grades and schools to which they have been assigned. Just as importantly, the routing and scheduling process includes one of the great features of the computer, and that's the high speed printing output. In the past, and in some instances it's still the case, hunt and peck typewriters are used. A slow and tedious job, and one prone to error. This is acceptable when the route never changes, but when it frequently does, everything has to be retyped, retimed and remeasured. No more – now the computer does it all and prints it in a matter of seconds.

This is an accurate labor saving help for every operation, and even more meaningful for special education transportation programs. Think how often the special ed routes are changed. In almost every case when a child moves or enters the system the entire route is affected, so that each change requires a rerouting of the whole bus schedule. To make matters worse, of course, it's rarely the last child on the route who is changed; it's typically the first child, so that you need a complete overhaul of the bus route. This means a:

1. Recalculation of the time at each stop
2. Recalculation of the mileage at each stop (odometer reading)
3. Confirmation by the dispatcher
4. Printing of the new route

5. Training the driver on the new route

(This usually takes place in the afternoon with everyone depending on the transportation director to have the new schedule and notifications prepared by 7:30 the next morning.)

Hand-in-glove with the computer is printing capability, the same that we see in department stores and airline ticket offices. Virtually instantaneous printing is available so that the dispatcher can do the re-keying of a child into a route, and then hand the new, printed route to the driver. So, no longer is one faced with changing routes then waiting several days until the logistics can be handled.

Fleet maintenance analysis is a must. The mechanical condition of the bus fleet is a necessity for smooth operations. If the buses don't run safely and dependably, the best planning goes down the drain.

Remember that you can capture cost data, parts life, cost estimates and parts replacements on the computer program. This chapter will only address the major categories:

1. Brakes
2. Electrical system
3. Steering
4. Engine
5. Transmission
6. Drive-line
7. Wheels, rims, and tires
8. Chassis
9. Body

The coding of work orders and parts purchases for a vehicle captures this information and provides it at any

level which the director demands. It can be done on a daily basis, although that's really not necessary. A monthly, or perhaps bimonthly, presentation of this data is appropriate for fleet managers. This furnishes an inventory analysis, by bus by month, and gives them an annual review of the expenditures for each bus.

This is important for budget reviews and budget projections. The local shop supervisor can conduct an analysis and projection of parts life based on this data. Furthermore, it's paramount for a private fleet operator to equate vehicle expenditures with revenue.

Another benefit derived from a computer is the personnel record administration. No longer is it necessary to dig through personnel files to check on school bus operator license expiration dates, the hours of their safety training, or the renewal of their safety and Red Cross Certificates – nor their driving records and performance reviews. It's easily captured on a computer and available to the administrator and, furthermore, can be programmed to flag those people whose licenses and certificates are soon to expire. You just call up all the drivers by these categories, the computer program does all the work.

Personnel records are frequently needed and should be available at the local level for the administrator. Too often, these records are stored in the basement of the building three blocks away and are unavailable for too long a period of time. The computer programs, be they mainframe or micro, make this information current and accessible to the fleet administrator on an immediate basis.

## PUPIL ENROLLMENT ANALYSIS

The second feature of this chapter is the demographic structure of the school system. Each child's location, grade level, and special program in which they are enrolled and the school to which they are assigned, are important data that every school system must have. Much of it often stays with the transportation department because so many of the students depend on school bus service. The program will store this data and on command make it readily available in an accurate and timely manner for the transportation administrator. No longer is it a dart throwing exercise or pin sticking mapboard that takes weeks to assemble and then is degraded when somebody asks an entirely different question. The computer provides the analysis. It provides an update of the system prints immediate reports, and explores options and alternatives for the staff to consider on a first hand basis, no waiting.

## SCHOOL REDISTRICTING

The third category is the opening and closing of schools. In the sixties this was no real problem because it was only the former that was required. Most school systems were in a growth mode and were frequently opening new buildings. But this is the eighties and the cycle has gone to the low side and now we're not opening schools, we're closing them. Which turns out to be more painful. The pain can be lessened with a computer analysis of the data and presentation of logical, definitive solutions.

The decisions ultimately have to be made by the school board and the professional staff, but the computer minimizes the time it takes to make those analyses and reduces the possibility of error.

So, an added benefit of the computer in transportation is the ability to assist the superintendent with the painful process of selecting which schools are to be closed. (Incidentally, the evidence today indicates that in another ten years, we will have gone full cycle and again be relying on the computer to assist us in opening new schools or reopening former schools.)

In summary, there is no doubt of the value of computers in pupil transportation. A good manager welcomes computerization because it makes the job easier and the analysis more valid.

**Thought for the Day: When we're through trying to improve, we're through.**

CHAPTER 11

# BUDGET

Money makes the world go around, and good management requires judicious, careful and wise spending of funds. Furthermore, in a school system, every administrator is given a public trust in the guardianship of public funds. The community depends upon management to spend it wisely, use it efficiently, and protect it as though it is its own.

There are two major parts of a budget which this chapter will address:

1. Facts

2. The maintenance of the budget document throughout the year

One must take several considerations into account regarding a budget. These considerations are typical of virtually every budget, whether it represents funding in pupil transportation, curriculum, or the school lunch program. The importance of valid and reliable facts cannot be stressed enough.

Bear in mind that a budget extends over a 12 month period, and in some cases, is planned two years before its implementation. Nobody has the ability to foresee, two years in advance, all emergencies, demands, and requirements. Lacking this capability, the next best effort an administrator can make is the collection of the most accurate and factual information available. The days of adding ten percent to the previous year's budget are gone. It's not

good management, and never was. Intuition is fine and sometimes accurate. Hunches are acceptable when they are predicated on facts, but the essence and the foundation of a reliable and effective budget is summed up in one word—FACTS.

You might ask yourself what facts you should be looking for in the development of a budget. There are many, and they all depend on the accumulation of past data. Incidentally, budgets are not a locked-in, rigid document by which one administers a program. On the contrary, when done properly, a budget is a sound management tool from which an administrator draws conclusions and makes decisions. Don't disregard judgments and ignore the need to make decisions simply because one is given a budget. A good budget leads to more decisions. One can be creative and innovative with the facts as support.

The following list is a sample of the items for which an administrator must obtain accurate data in the construction of a budget.

1. The full time professional staff complement
2. Classified staff complement
3. Drivers
4. Mechanics
5. Supporting staff, i.e., dispatchers, trainers, field supervisors, and terminal personnel
6. Supplies and materials, among which are gasoline, oil, lubricants, antifreeze, chassis parts, body parts, tires, tools and machinery under $50.00, and office supplies and materials. You need data on replacement equipment. Buses wear out and must be replaced, as do tools and machinery. You need information on additional (capital)

equipment: new buses, equipment, tools, and machinery. All deserve a separate category and must be accounted for. See the documents at the end of this chapter.

It is most important that all of these categories be addressed systematically, using the best available information. Incidentally, each system has different demands, so these examples should not be considered restrictive. Certain areas will need different budget categories. Alaska, for example, has different demands than does Florida. The New England states might well have budget items that Southern California does not require.

Good management adjusts to its demands. The important thing is the inclusion of them in the budget. Remember, facts are all important; facts form the foundation from which decisions are made.

The second major category is the timeliness of the budget itself. The best description for a budget is "a living document," because it must be utilized in that fashion. Please don't consider the budget a book to be put on the shelf never to be seen again until the following year, when it's replaced by the new one! There can be no dust on a budget. Top administrators keep the budget by their sides at all times. It's a management tool, and a very vital one it is.

A budget, repeat, is not an inflexible document. It cannot make decisions for the management staff, but is a guideline; an excellent instrument from which the administrator draws conclusions and makes decisions. So it must be alive and well and referred to in a systematic manner. The frequency varies, depending on the needs of the school system. Some school districts with many employees will have a very high payroll, so a review of the payroll is a major function of the administrator. The fre-

quency varies because some employers pay once a week, some pay once a month. Whatever the schedule, the payroll expenditure should be analyzed by the transportation administrator, who in a sense, signs the checks.

There are other categories that need to be addressed in the same fashion.

Fuel is a volatile account in virtually every school bus operation. Every organization which runs buses in this day and age depends on a slim margin of fuel prices and availability. So, without fail, the fuel account must be scrutinized with great frequency. If the fleet is large, the account should be carefully reviewed on a daily basis. If the system operates in a rural atmosphere with hardly any changes in the daily routes, and little field trip activity, then the frequency need not be as great; perhaps bimonthly. The administrator makes the judgment. The important thing is that it is systematically reviewed and systematically analyzed.

Other accounts do not demand that attention. The purchase of replacement equipment, for example, might well be viewed two, perhaps at the most, three times during the year. Generally speaking, when a system buys buses it's a onetime purchase for that fiscal year. Obviously, it's a waste of management talent to spend any more than what is necessary on it simply because it's not going to be repeated. That too, is a professional judgment rendered by the administrator.

Each system, again, reflects its own needs and demands. The important function that the administrator carries out is the timeliness in keeping close tabs on the budget document.

A budget analysis should consider several things:

1. The actual expenditures for the month.

2. The comparison of those expenditures to the previous month.

3. The annual amount budgeted.

4. The year to date expenditures.

5. The comparison of those expenditures to the previous year.

A good administrator uses a form of cost control with the staff. The ability to hire creative employees often leaves the manager with many requests for innovative projects. It's in the administrator's best interest that a cost-effectiveness scale be developed for those potential projects. What is the benefit ratio for the funds expended? What is the payback period? What impact does the expenditure have on the tax base of the district? This is a very difficult one to answer, and will not be available in the transportation department. The budget office should be able to supply the answer.

There are other ramifications in a cost-control program. There will be people involved, which means wages. But just as importantly, are the people available? Do they have the talents that this particular project might require? What about office space? What about equipment and supplies that no longer can be drawn from the central warehouse? The list can be voluminous. The important consideration for an administrator is the requirement that a cost-effectiveness program support the conclusions.

Think back to the earlier chapter on administration. Employees want and deserve fair and honest answers to their requests. The administrator has to make decisions, not all of which will be liked and appreciated. While some

employees might well be disappointed that their projects were not approved, it's important to remember that with a cost control outlook the administrator can make sound decisions. The employees will eventually be satisfied with the integrity of the administrator and the soundness of the facts. This is an important feature of good management.

In summary, there are two primary thoughts an administrator must bear in mind at all times with a budget:

1. The development and the construction of a budget must be based on sound data, acquired and built on a systematic basis.

2. The maintenance of a budget document is an extremely valuable management tool. A budget should not be used as a restrictive, rigid document, but rather as the most current set of data from which decisions can be made, and supported.

There are two important steps to follow in budget work. We've discussed the preparation of a budget and the significance of not putting it on a shelf until the following year. It's now time to discuss the two features which make the budget a workable management tool:

1. Professional administrators scrutinize all budget expenditures on a monthly basis.

2. The scrutiny is done on a planned basis.

The summaries must be checked, in this case referring to monthly ones because that is the typical interval that school districts and accounting systems produce them. The interval is not that critical at this point. What's really important is that an administrator schedule his own time and discipline himself to conduct his analysis on a scheduled basis. The trap into which many people fall is

the one which is by thinking, "I'll get to it when I have time." Administrators can make it successful, but only by scheduling it as they would an appointment with a parent. They must use it as a block of time during which they can focus on the expenditures for the previous month.

What comes from the scrutiny? Several things. Familiarity and knowledge of the previous month's financial history. For example, fuel and salaries are two large accounts in the school bus operation. Now there's nothing magic or mysterious about finding distortions. But you must know the number of school days there were, and how many days the buses operated.

A second requirement is accurate information regarding the number of miles the buses traveled during those days.

The third is the careful evaluation of the fuel which was consumed. As you know, fuel gallonage translates into dollars. Check those categories in your fuel account. Your computer software program will tell you if your buses were operating as efficiently as they have in the past. But just as importantly, your evaluation will flag for you anything that's distorted. Distortions can be legitimate. If you went through a snow storm, a windy, cold night, and/or early dismissals within different grade levels, then you could have a legitimate distortion in your fuel consumption.

But you might determine that none of those events occurred. You might discover a leak in your tanks, or that your vendor made a mistake in the billing. You just might determine that your own computer has made a mistake! It could well have happened that the purchasing department has mischarged your gasoline or that your own staff has made a clerical error as they recorded the readings from

the pumps. And, unfortunately, you might discover that somebody's stealing fuel. There's no formula to follow, and no schematic which will reveal the answer to you in a hypothetical situation.

The process to the solution is:

1. Managing your time to carefully and systematically scrutinize the summaries.

2. Looking for aberrations in the data.

That puts you on the track to finding the answer. Whatever it is, it will depend on your search for the facts.

A by-product, and quite candidly, a payback, of the time you spend on your monthly analysis, is an opportunity to make changes, or at the least, to recommend adjustments to your budget during the school year. Bear in mind, a budget cannot be a document which prohibits decision making. Rather, it's a management tool which permits you to make analyses, draw conclusions, and make decisions. A professional manager must follow that process. As a matter of fact, his decision becomes very easy in most cases, because the data virtually makes conclusions for him. So management success is not due to hunches and whimsy, it's due to the daily management of one's own time, concentration, and focus.

Changes are frequently necessary. Situations change (bond issues are defeated, bond issues are passed, new school board members are elected), all of which are external conditions over which the transportation administrator has no control, yet to which must respond. Top administrators must keep up-to-date in budget reviews. By doing so, they develop a guideline which permits them to make knowledgeable, sound, decisions and recommendations.

The author also must mention the importance of a budget because it represents and supports management objectives. Budget work is financial because dollars in our society generate action. However, the mere presence of dollars does not constitute professional objectives. It only translates them. The true administrative objectives and goals are those which have been carefully worked out with thought and foresight; with input from the staff and every other available source.

This is a human reasoning process; it's not an arithmetical or numbers game. The budget supports the objectives. It's an outline. It shows, through the medium of money, how those objectives can be finalized and carried out.

Once again, some contractors and school districts can afford to make a budget within a month or two before the fiscal year begins, others in large systems might be faced with a two-year interval between the beginning of the budget and the actual implementation of it. Machines are not perfect. They are simply the results of people's efforts. Vehicle specifications can be miscalculated; brake systems and engines fail to produce what was orginally expected, which causes fuel consumption to drop below the expected norm. This sort of change must be recognized and corrected. In either case, there must be room and flexibility to make adjustments to meet changing demands. Better adaptations are made when the professional manager is up-to-date with sound data.

The same principle applies to wages. In a large system, the author recommends a semimonthly review of the salary accounts. Since 50 to 75 percent of a budget is in wages, it is obligatory to constantly review the account. In the overall scheme of one's administrative day, and in the

overall accomplishment of a professional manager's objectives, it's important to stay on top of things. It's of little or no value to discover at the end of a year a mistake that was made 10 months earlier. In many systems, after a certain period of time, the accounts cannot be reconciled. A simple computer error might have charged the transportation budget with typewriters, trucks, and cafeteria salaries, from which there sometimes is no recovery. So be current and stay on top of the summaries and their reconciliations.

Goals are achieved only by building a budget on solid information and by maintaining it, analyzing it, and reviewing it.

There is an increasing pattern among school districts to make schools cost centers, which is a good accounting and management tool. But it requires the transportation director to stay closely attuned to school expenditures, especially wages, fuel, field trips, and aides' salaries. A school can't be hit at the end of the school year with a six months old deficit. If this happens:

1. It does not look good for the transportation department.

2. The transportation office might not be able to recover funds it didn't spend.

To repeat, the professional administrator must be a good "time manager" in order to stay on top of the data. What a careful scrutiny of the dollar expenditures does is:

1. Support the work in achieving the objectives.

2. Provide the flexibility to make adjustments while meeting those objectives.

One of the biggest pitfalls an administrator can fall into is the "putting out the fire" syndrome. This can easily happen due to the nature of the pupil transportation business, but a professional administrator must work overtime to avoid it as much as possible. The secret to the avoidance of this syndrome is good time management.

It's helpful to review the previous year and, in some cases, the previous two years' history, which gives one a broader view of the picture. Here again, this cannot be one document for the 15,840 school districts in the United States. There will be variations. The important thing is to utilize the budget as a management tool and to spend the money wisely.

**Thought for the Day: To speculate without facts is to attempt to enter a house without a key; by wandering aimlessly round and round, searching the walls, and now and then peeping through the windows. Facts are the key.**

## Pupil Transportation Services

| SUMMARY BY: | ACTUAL | BUDGET | LAST YEAR ACTUAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| POSITION | | | |
| Full-Time, Professional | | | |
| Full-Time, Classified | | | |
| TOTAL BY POSITION | | | |
| OBJECT | | | |
| 1 Salaries and Wages | | | |
| 2 Fringe Benefits | | | |
| 3 Contracted Services | | | |
| 4 Supplies and Materials | | | |
| 5 Other Operating Expense | | | |
| 6 Equipment - Replacement | | | |
| 7 Equipment - Additional | | | |
| 8 Outgoing Transfers | | | |
| TOTAL BY OBJECT | | | |
| FUND | | | |
| General | | | |
| Revolving | | | |
| Other | | | |
| TOTAL BY FUND | | | |

## OPERATING EXPENSES OTHER THAN SALARY & WAGES

Pupil Transportation Services

SUMMARY BY: _____ ACTUAL _____ BUDGET _____ LAST YEAR ACTUAL _____

### CONTRACTED SERVICES

Maintenance & Repair of Motor Vehicles
Outside Contractor

TOTAL CONTRACTED SERVICES

### SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

Tools & Machinery Under $50
Gasoline
Oil
Lubricants
Anti-Freeze
Chassis Parts
Tires
Body Parts
Other Parts
Office Supplies & Materials

TOTAL SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

### OTHER OPERATING EXPENSE

Meals, Lodging and Travel
Motor Vehicle Insurance

TOTAL OTHER OPERATING EXPENSE

### EQUIPMENT - REPLACEMENT

Motor Vehicles
Tools & Machinery Over $50

TOTAL EQUIPMENT - REPLACEMENT

### EQUIPMENT - ADDITIONAL

Furniture, Office
Office Machines, Administration
Tools and Machinery Over $50
Office equipment

TOTAL EQUIPMENT - ADDITIONAL

## ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AVAILABLE

## THROUGH PUPIL TRANSPORTATION SAVINGS

Savings . . . . . $150,361.00

Items which could be added to the instructional budget as a result of the above savings.

Remedial Reading Teachers

Elementary Teachers

677 Microscopes

17,689 Bunsen Burners

9,982 Elementary Weather Map Kits

3,007 Earth-in-Space Science Globes

1,134 Cellos

853 French Horns

1,193 Television Sets Wired for Educational Reception

752 Encyclopedia, 24 Volumes

CHAPTER 12

# INCLEMENT WEATHER

At all times the transportation administrator must be concerned about safe conditions for the buses and the youngsters who walk to and from school, especially in bad weather, rain, snow, ice, wind, dust—whatever the local situation.

The management of the school system, be it the superintendent, assistant superintendent, or the school board, must depend on the transportation administrator for input into the decision to close school, and generally speaking, depend on the administrator to make the decision. At the very least, top management must rely on the transportation administrator for a final recommendation. It's poor management by the school district if it ignores the advice of the transportation administrator. It would be poor on at least two counts:

1. The transportation administrator is the professional in the system.

2. The transportation director knows and understands variable driving conditions and the effect they have on safety and schedules.

In all conditions and circumstances, the transportation administrator is the focal point in the entire decision process.

Inclement weather conditions threaten and affect safe school bus operations.

There are three fundamental decisions to make:

1. Cancel school
2. Delay the opening of school
3. Dismiss school early after it's been in session

## CANCEL SCHOOL

No school. This is exactly what it says, inclement weather being such a threat factor that it's the decision of the system not to run the buses, keep children at home, and never open the doors of the buildings. There are many elements which are affected by this decision:

Safety—The lives and health of children depend on the drivers and buses; the drivers who must operate safely, and the buses which must be in safe mechanical condition. Neither can be effective if roads are snowbound, visibility is poor, and road conditions are hazardous. Drivers who can't see normal distances can't make good decisions, and brake and steering systems can't be depended upon with confidence.

Homelife—In today's society, increasing numbers of both parents work during the day. Closing school has an impact on households where one or more children in the family must remain alone in their homes. While the inability to safely operate cannot compromise the decision because it's inconvenient for working parents, it is a fact to consider in a borderline decision.

Another factor is ADA, average daily attendance. In many states, ADA is the significant component of a school district's financial structure. In fact, in some states it is the only source of funding. Districts are reimbursed on a per capita basis, so naturally the higher the attendance, the more money they receive. In reverse, every day that children don't attend school reduces their operating funds, but their fixed costs remain. Teacher's and administrative

salaries, utilities, bond payments, fringe benefits, and annual fees remain the same. So the outgo is constant but the revenue is decreased. Never should this fact of life impugn the integrity of the administrator in deciding whether it's safe to operate school buses and have school. ADA should never compromise the decision. On the other hand, it is a real concern for some school administrators, especially for those who are the financially oriented. It is a consideration that must be given its proper attention.

## DELAYED OPENING OF SCHOOL

The second topic in the inclement weather category is the delayed opening of school. The opportunity to open school on a delayed basis has several important benefits:

1. It should be a safer operation
2. It permits children to attend school that day
3. It maintains the ADA

The primary goal of the delayed opening of school is to avoid the rush hour traffic. In urban and suburban school systems, everyone faces enormous traffic problems. Even when the weather is good, an astute administrator attempts to utilize existing traffic patterns for the school system's benefit. There's no point sitting in traffic jams all morning and burning fuel when by changing the school schedule the commuter rush hour traffic can be avoided. Needless to say, traffic patterns and traffic behavior are a very prime consideration in good weather as well as bad.

The solution to avoiding this conflict is to let the commuters go to work. For them, there's no adjustment in work hours and little consideration of bad weather. So let

them move safely and slowly on the highways, streets, and freeways and get to work.

Then, because the children are starting later in the morning, the buses have virtually free access to all the streets, highways, and freeways.

Incidentally, don't overlook the fact that school dismissal remains the same. You're merely delaying the opening; once the buses arrive and children go to school, you're resuming the normal schedule. The buses run the same routes and pick up the same students, they merely start at a later time. After the children enter the school, they go into their regular classrooms and proceed as they would on a normal day. The important thing to remember is that the dismissal remains the same.

How long do you delay? This is the part of the plan that must be adopted well in advance and be consistent throughout the year. The typical program is based on a one hour operating delay, although some urban districts use an hour and a half. Each district must assess its individual situation and make its own determination.

The administrative staff must explore the same alternatives in considering a delay as they do in cancelling school. The process and variables are the same. The decision rests in the judgment that the weather will clear later in the day and permit a safe return. The administrator must weigh all the variables. If the evidence points in the direction that the temperature will rise and there will be enough time to clear the streets, school driveways, and the school parking lots, then there is every likelihood of success.

On the other hand, if, in their judgment, the weather is not going to improve and the driving conditions are

going to be just as unsafe at 3:30 in the afternoon as they were at 7:30 in the morning, they should rule out a delayed opening of school and choose the alternative, no school at all.

So, bear in mind, that the evaluative process and the judgment are the same whether you're delaying school or whether you're closing school.

A delayed opening of school that results in a safe return for the children at the normal dismissal time is the mark of success for which the administrator aims.

## EARLY DISMISSAL

The third category is the process which is needed when inclement weather develops after the buses have arrived in the morning, and it becomes evident that weather conditions are going to deteriorate as the day goes on. These conditions demand the early dismissal of the youngsters and an earlier departure than what is normally called for in the schedule. The exact time varies, of course, with the weather conditions. If school normally dismisses at 3:00 p.m. weather conditions might require that it's best to go home at 11:00 a.m. The following week it might be 1:00 p.m.; there's no constant in this. What is constant is the deliberation that the administrator uses during adverse weather conditions.

There must be ample time to notify everyone that school is dismissing early. And everyone means bus drivers, parents, the police departments, and highway patrol. It includes the road clearing agencies as well as the local radio and TV stations. There is no point in determining a school's closing time and then not giving everyone enough time to be prepared. Remember, your afternoon dismissal doesn't allow you to have a captive

audience like it does early in the morning when everybody is at home waiting to hear the news on radio or TV. Once people drop the children off at school, they go to work, and the bus drivers go to other places. Furthermore, due to the rapidly deteriorating weather, they need more time to get back to the terminals and garages for their buses.

Likewise, the public works agencies need time to gear up, especially in an unexpected storm. They have nothing mysterious and magical about their logistics. It takes time to call people off night shifts, to hook up equipment, to warm up engines. The school system can make a terrible mistake by announcing a premature school dismissal when the road people haven't had a chance to get their equipment onto the streets or the police department is notified too late to get the crossing guards out. The decision might be a very sound one, but it'll be flawed in its implementation if the district doesn't provide ample time to put it into action. So, there must be time to carry out the plan.

One other important thing to consider. While it cannot be the primary focus, the cafeteria program does deserve attention. Don't overlook the fact that there might be thousands of meals in preparation. Realistically, that's not a good time to dismiss children. To repeat, the school lunch program cannot be the deciding factor, but it deserves consideration when the staff is making the decision.

How does the transportation administrator go about translating this information into the big decision? The one everyone waits for, "Is there school today?"

Number one, by being out on the street early in the morning, anywhere from 3 a.m on, to personally assess the weather conditions. By driving, even walking, in the area

one will gain a knowledge and feel for the weather conditions. This can't be done from an office.

Number two, so must the staff. For the same reasons.

Number three, they must be in touch with other knowledgeable people. For example, the police department, the public works agencies and, in some cases, the civil defense personnel. They must communicate with them, but, by no means, should they base everything on their assessments. One of the most uncertain factors of our lives is weather; even professional meteorologists miss. By no means then, can transportation administrators accept another agency's recommendation as fact and gospel. They must ask for their input, and weigh it properly.

Set a deadline for the decision. The sooner the better, but there has to be a time by which it's reached, and after it's made, the administrator can't second guess himself. Others might, but he can't.

Don't forget to keep your boss informed! When you and the staff plan to be out at 3:00 the next morning, tell your superiors. They need to know that you're on top of the situation.

There are several meteorological criteria that must be analyzed and considered. These criteria are valid in any or all of the categories; no school, a delayed opening of school, or an early dismissal. One does not have to be a professional weatherman to know and understand them, but a transportation administrator must be familiar with them and weigh them in reaching a decision.

These criteria include the wind direction. On the east coast of the United States, southerly winds bring heavy, moist, wet snow. It does not drift, is very slippery, and its

weight tears down power lines which affect traffic patterns because of the traffic lights. It's also very difficult to handle because of its weight and its bulk. In reverse, northerly winds bring very dry, light snow, which packs down, and in many cases, is safe on which to drive. It's light and is easily pushed aside and it does not create a safety hazard, as does wet snow. You can apply the same direction concept to other parts of the country. It might be west and east instead of north and south; regardless, the local administrator must know his local conditions.

The other checks are wind chill factor, barometric pressure, and temperatures. They are significant, and are data with which the administrator must be acquainted. Wind speed affects the real temperature because the chill factor is the true "comfort index." How can pupils wait for the buses, or walk to school when the wind force changes the temperature reading from $40^{\circ}$ to $20^{\circ}$?

A rising barometer means clearing weather; a falling one indicates stormy conditions. Higher temperatures bring melting snow and ice, while falling temperatures bring freezing conditions, both of which have a significant effect on driving and safety.

In summary, the decision maker needs every bit of information in order to make the decision. And a little luck never hurts, either.

**Thought for the Day: The best way to be right or wrong is humbly.**

CHAPTER 13

# CONCLUSION

Successful management of a function is always unique; full of variables and uncertainties, and never ruled by a rigid structure. Good and effective administration is characterized by a positive attitude, the willingness to investigate new methods, and the ability to adjust to flexible conditions. Above all, a great manager applies common sense to every action.

This book was written for you with the goal of helping you expand your management capabilities. As one reflects on the ingredients of the management "pie", it's clear that one does not have to be born with exotic talents in order to become successful. On the contrary, success is the result of a healthy attitude, empathy for people, the desire to learn, and the use of common sense.

I have written this book in keeping with these characteristics. Use it with freedom. Freedom to make wise decisions, and appreciate others. Use it to rise above the average and be a leader. And when you're tired, frustrated, and lonely, read it again, because every day brings a new light.

APPENDIX

# TRANSPORTATION JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Employees deserve to know what's expected of them, what the parameters of their jobs are. Management must minimize misunderstandings and one way to do so is by the use of job descriptions. A clear position description helps management and labor because both parties can be confident about their roles and expectations. Caution to the administration--leave space in the job description for unanticipated assignments. There's nothing worse than a worker who refuses to work on a job because it isn't listed, and then files a grievance over it.

This Appendix contains job descriptions for the following positions:

Director of Transportation
Supervisor of Transportation
Bus Driver Manager/Foreman
Bus Driver Trainer
Dispatcher
Bus Driver
Bus Aide
Substitute Bus Driver
Automotive Maintenance Foreman I
Automotive Maintenance Foreman II
Automotive Mechanic I
Automotive Mechanic II
Automotive Machinist
Garageman

Lubrication Specialist I
Lubrication Specialist II
Tire Specialist I
Tire Specialist II
Trades Apprentice
Trades Helper

Use these descriptions as a management tool for you as well as the employees. The more comprehensive and understood they are, the better they're used. The results are a comfortable, confident, staff which does its work well, and as a result, the operation is safe, efficient, and successful.

## DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION

Organizes, supervises, and directs the pupil transportation program. This is a management position, and the director is fully responsible for the comprehensive operation of school bus/pupil transportation. Responsibilities include supervision of all employees, fiscal integrity, and human relations skills.

The Director is responsible for the screening and selection of personnel, the training and retraining of bus drivers, bus aides, vehicle maintenance repair persons, and office staff. Additional duties are: meeting with parents and the general public, preparation of the transportation budget, maintaining a systematic budget analysis, providing routine and special reports, and providing constant rapport with the general staff/organization.

### EXAMPLES OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

—Establish and direct pupil transportation as a support system to the educational program of the school district.

—Implement school board policies.

—Carry out and enforce appropriate local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

—Develop and administer department policies.

—Plan the operation of all programs in conjunction with staff members, as well as input from lay groups, i.e., PTA, parent councils, school-site administrators.

—Check bus schedules and bus route efficiency on a periodic, systematic basis.

—Check bus operation and bus route safety on a periodic, systematic basis.

—Interview and select new employees.

—Establish and conduct training and retraining programs for all employees.

—Write vehicle specifications.

—Prepare bid specification for purchasing authority.

—Prepare pupil transportation annual budget.

—Review and analyze budget expenditures on a planned, periodic basis.

—Establish and conduct department performance indices.

—Establish and conduct personnel performance indices.

—Attend professional meetings, seminars, and workshops.

—Maintain open and clear lines of communication with appropriate departments and organizations.

—Delegate adequate authority to subordinates.

—Support and encourage staff and employees.

—Establish and carry out a continuing program of safety education.

—Support a cooperative relationship with appropriate law enforcement agencies.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED ABILITIES AND SKILLS

Ability to create and maintain an atmosphere and environment of good human relations with employees, parents, lay citizens, and staff personnel; perform administrative and managerial functions in a mature, independent manner; considerable knowledge of school bus operations (routing, scheduling, driver selection, driver training, driver retraining, vehicle maintenance, vehicle repair, vehicle specifications, safety prevention and education programs, motor vehicle laws, rules, and regulations, understandable verbal and written communication skills); ability to effectively communicate in verbal and written modes; skills in personnel and personal supervision; perform administrative and management duties; understand and carry out financial "cost benefit" service functions; implement departmental and school board policies.

## EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

Graduation from an accredited college or university, preferably with an emphasis in course work in business administration, education, or the social sciences. Certification by the state, or local, agency(s). Three to five years' experience in the pupil transportation profession.

## NOTE

There are many variables regarding a candidate's experience and education. For example, the size of the bus fleet, the size of the school district and it's growth pattern, and the economic resources of the employer all have a significant impact. In recognition of these factors, local sys-

tems may well be forced to substitute different qualifications. Fewer years of experience and less formal education are frequent compromises, and sometimes acceptable ones. Nevertheless, a school district or a contractor must never lose sight of the fact that pupil transportation management is a demanding, complex responsibility. It is one of the most significant, and crucial, facets of a school system, and the administration and management of such a vital service program cannot be "bought off" with cheap labor.

**Thought for the Day: With high standards comes high performance.**

## SUPERVISOR OF TRANSPORTATION

This position is under the direction of the Director of Transportation, and assists in the management and supervision of the program. The principal responsibilities are those of supervision of employees.

A person in this capacity is called on for planning, organization, coordinating, and implementing the departmental policies. One also must carry out the same functions within the geographic area of his responsibility. Supervision is required for terminal managers, bus driver trainers, field supervisors, bus drivers, bus aides, and vehicle maintenance personnel. Focus must always be in the safety field, both with the school buses as well as the repair shops and parking lots. A "hands on" approach to the resolution of safety concerns differentiates this position from the Director of Transportation.

This position is an administrative one, considered to be top management, and must be treated as such.

### EXAMPLES OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

– Supervises all employees in the appropriate administrative area to which assigned.

– Plans, schedules, and supervises all school bus routes.

– Monitors and evaluates all school bus schedules on a systematic basis.

– Recruits bus driver candidates.

– Selects, trains, and evaluates all bus drivers, bus aides, and supporting personnel.

– Maintains personnel and payroll data and files for all employees under immediate supervision.

– Provides data for budget preparation.

– Assists Director of Transportation in the development of the annual budget.

– Reviews and analyzes the budget on a periodic basis.

– Organizes and supervises safety meetings and programs for all personnel.

– Maintains a "hands on" liaison with appropriate law enforcement and safety agencies.

– Maintains a "hands on" liaison with appropriate school-site personnel.

– Develops data regarding the planning of school attendance areas.

– Assists in the planning and implementation of school attendance area changes and modifications.

– Serves as a liaison with parent groups and service organizations.

– Attends professional seminars and workshops.

– Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED ABILITIES AND SKILLS

Ability to effectively communicate in verbal and written modes; skills in personnel and personal supervision; operate independently in assigned administrative area; perform administrative and management duties; under-

stand and carry out financial "cost benefit" service functions; full knowledge of local, state, and federal motor vehicle laws, regulations, and rules; implement departmental and school board policies; represent employer with integrity; ability to create and maintain an atmosphere and environment of good human relations with employees, parents, lay citizens, and staff personnel; skill in effective supervision; perform administrative and managerial functions in a mature, independent manner; considerable knowledge of school bus operations (routing, scheduling, driver selection, driver training, driver retraining, vehicle maintenance, vehicle repair, vehicle specifications, safety prevention and education programs, motor vehicle laws, rules, and regulations, understandable verbal and written communication skills).

## EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION

Graduation from an accredited college or university, preferably with an emphasis in course work in business administration, education, or the social sciences. Certification by the state, or local, agency(s). Three to five years' experience in the pupil transportation profession.

## NOTE

There are many variables regarding a candidate's experience and education. For example, the size of the bus fleet, the size of the school district and it's growth pattern, and the economic resources of the employer all have a significant impact. In recognition of these factors, local systems may well be forced to substitute different qualifications. Fewer years of experience and less formal education are frequent compromises, and sometimes acceptable ones. Nevertheless, a school district or a contractor must never lose sight of the fact that pupil

transportation management is a demanding, complex responsibility. It is one of the most significant, and crucial, facets of a school system, and the administration and management of such a vital service program cannot be "bought off" with cheap labor.

**Thought for the Day: With high standards comes high performance.**

## BUS DRIVER MANAGER / FOREMAN

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Performs supervisory work in an assigned area, coordinating the work and instruction of bus drivers and bus aides. Includes supervision of other staff members. Does related work as required.

This is a responsible supervisory position involving buses, bus drivers and bus aides assigned to one or more terminals. Work involves the dispatching of bus drivers, substitutes, and bus aides on regularly scheduled routes. This class is distinguished from that of bus driver by the supervisory responsibility for all personnel assigned to a terminal.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Visits schools to ensure that buses are running and on schedule.

—Arranges for substitute bus drivers and bus aides and dispatches on proper route and schedule.

—Checks buses on parking lot to be certain they are fueled and in safe operating condition.

—Interviews applicants for employment and makes selections from among the best qualified.

—Keeps time records and handles payroll for all personnel assigned to his area.

—When necessary, drives bus to fill in for absent driver.

– Alters or reroutes and rearranges schedules as necessary.

– Assists management in establishing routes and schedules.

– Arranges for use of buses on field trips in emergencies.

– Dispatches maintenance crew to disabled buses.

– Attends safety meetings and other meetings in connection with bus services.

– Keeps records and prepares reports.

– Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Thorough knowledge of driving safety and courtesy; thorough knowledge of the operation of automobiles and buses; thorough knowledge of local streets and routes and all applicable laws and regulations of school bus operation; ability to plan and supervise the work of others; ability to work with others; sound judgment; good physical condition; ability to supervise employees with patience, tact, and courtesy.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Considerable driving experience, some of which shall have been at the level of bus driver, and completion of a standard high school course, preferably supplemented by traffic safety courses and driver training courses; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

# BUS DRIVER TRAINER

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Performs instructional work in the training and retraining of bus drivers and bus aides. Does related work as required.

An employee in this class is responsible for properly orienting and training all new employees who operate school buses. Plans and executes an in-service training program designed to provide periodic refresher training to all employees who operate school buses. Work is performed under the general supervision of an Administrator of Transportation, but work is usually performed independently. This class is distinguished from that of Manager/Foreman due to the specialized work of training and instructing.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Instructs new drivers in the operation of the vehicle, including shifting of gears, turning movements, braking, and backing.

– Instructs drivers in the use of mirrors and helps develop skills by training the driver over various roads.

– Trains drivers in safety procedures related to the transportation of school children, including the use of safety devices, approaching stops, loading and unloading, and the use of emergency equipment.

– Rides with drivers on regular runs to observe their operation and driving technique and gives advice, encouragement, or criticism at the end of the run.

– Maintains training records and evaluates drivers at the end of the training period.

– Keeps records and prepares reports.

– Instructs drivers and aides in child behavior and child management.

– Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Thorough knowledge of the operation and mechanical functioning of school buses; thorough knowledge of laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to the operation of school buses; demonstrated skill in driving various types of school buses; ability to train and supervise people; use patience, tact, courtesy; sound judgment; be in good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Extensive driving experience, a considerable amount of which shall have been as a bus driver. Completion of a standard high school course, supplemented by training in a recognized driver education course and traffic safety course; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

# DISPATCHER

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Performs supervisory work in an assigned area, coordinating the work of bus drivers; does related work as required.

This is a responsible supervisory position involving buses, bus drivers and bus aides. Work involves the daily dispatching of bus drivers, bus aides, and substitutes on regularly scheduled routes. This class is distinguished from that of bus driver by the supervisory responsibility.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Arranges for substitute bus drivers and bus aides, and assigns them to their proper route and schedule.

– Alters, reroutes, and rearranges schedules as necessary.

– Assists management in establishing routes and schedules.

– Checks buses to be certain they are in safe condition to be operated.

– Interviews applicants for employment and makes selections from among the best qualified.

– Keeps time records and handles payroll for all assigned personnel.

– When necessary, drives bus to fill in for absent drivers.

– Arranges for use of buses on field trips.

—Dispatches maintenance crew to disabled buses when necessary.

—Attends safety meetings and other meetings in connection with bus services.

—Keeps records and prepares reports.

—Visits schools to ensure that buses are running and on schedule, when possible.

—Other duties as assigned.

### REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Thorough knowledge of driving safety and courtesy; thorough knowledge of the operation of automobiles and buses; thorough knowledge of local streets and bus routes and all appropriate areas; thorough knowledge of applicable laws and regulations of school bus operation; ability to plan and supervise the work of others; sound judgment; good physical condition.

### ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Considerable driving experience, some of which shall have been at the level of bus driver and completion of a standard high school course, preferably supplemented by traffic safety courses and driver training courses; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

# BUS DRIVER

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Operates a school bus in transporting pupils and authorized personnel to and from schools; does related work as required.

Employees in this class are responsible for following an assigned route and schedule in the safe operation of a school bus. General supervision and training is received from the Dispatcher, the Bus Driver Manager/Foreman, and the Bus Driver Trainer.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Operates a school bus on an assigned route in transporting children to and from schools.

– Maintains order among students aboard school bus and reports cases of misbehavior to school and staff officials.

– Inspects bus and checks gas, oil, water and all lights, brakes and safety equipment before driving.

– Prepares report of accidents and prolonged traffic delays.

– Attends periodic safety meetings.

– Prepares monthly report of number of children transported and bus mileage/time.

– Occasionally transports students on field trips and outings.

– Keeps bus clean and orderly.

– Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Interest in and empathy for children; comprehensive knowledge of driving safety and courtesy; comprehensive knowledge of the operation of automobiles and buses; thorough knowledge of the local street and road system; thorough knowledge of State regulations and laws pertaining to the operation of school buses; good knowledge of Motor Vehicle Laws and Regulations of the State Board of Education; some knowledge of first aid; ability to understand and carry out oral and written instructions; ability to maintain effective control over groups of children; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Some experience in driving an automobile; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Possession of a valid operator's license(s) to drive a school bus. Ability to meet special training and qualifications as set forth by the employer and appropriate agencies.

# BUS AIDE

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Performs supervisory work in overseeing the safety and comfort of handicapped and other students riding on a school bus and crossing streets; does related work as required.

An employee in this class is responsible for the safety and comfort of handicapped and other students riding on a school bus. Work is performed under the supervision of the Bus Driver, the Bus Driver Manager/Foreman.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Helps students on and off bus.

—Assists students in crossing street.

—Loads and unloads students in wheel chairs.

—Assists in keeping discipline on school bus.

—Assures that seat belts and other safety restraining devices are used, and that they are securely fastened.

—Discusses with school principals and parents problems which arise on bus.

—Assists students who become ill on bus.

—Makes and prepares reports.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Good knowledge of care and discipline of students; ability to deal patiently and effectively with students; ability to deal courteously and effectively with school Principals and parents; patience and understanding; sincere interest in helping students, sincere interest in their safety; physical strength and agility; willingness to work in varying and adverse weather conditions; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Some experience in working with students (experience with the physically handicapped and/or retarded where applicable) and completion of a standard high school course, preferably supplemented by training in child behavior and traffic safety; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

# SUBSTITUTE BUS DRIVER

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

In the absence (sickness, bus breakdown, accident, etc.) of the regular route driver, the substitute bus driver operates the school bus transporting pupils and authorized personnel to and from schools; does related work as required.

Upon assignment, an employee in this class assumes all the duties and responsibilities of the regular bus driver for following an assigned route and schedule in the safe operation of a school bus. Substitute bus drivers are trained in the location of all routes assigned to that particular terminal, and in the operation and efficient procedure for operating all the types of buses assigned to the terminal. General supervision is received from the Dispatcher, Bus Driver Manager/Foremen, and Bus Driver Trainer.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Operates various types of school buses over any of the assigned routes in transporting children to and from schools.

—Maintains order among students aboard school bus and reports cases of misbehavior to school and staff officials.

—Inspects bus and checks gas, oil, water, and all lights, brakes and safety equipment before driving.

—Prepares report of accidents and prolonged traffic delays.

—Attends periodic safety meetings.

—Assists new and relief drivers in locating stops and designated runs throughout the area.

—Takes spare bus to a driver in case of a breakdown, accident, or drives the route providing the regular driver is not already transporting children.

—Assists the Bus Driver Manager/Foreman, Dispatcher in keeping the run sheets up to date.

—Assists in the distribution, receipt, and checking of monthly reports.

—Distributes bulletins, job-related materials, and gives job-related messages to drivers.

—Assists in drawing maps of pickup points for bus routes.

—Prepares monthly report of children transported and bus mileage/time.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Interest in and empathy for children; comprehensive knowledge of driving safety and courtesy; comprehensive knowledge of the operation of automobiles and the ability to drive (or be trainable) on buses; extensive knowledge of the local street and road system; thorough knowledge of State regulations and laws pertaining to the operation of school buses; good knowledge of Motor Vehicle Laws and Regulations of the State Board of Education; some knowledge of first aid; ability to understand and carry out oral and written instructions; ability to maintain effective

control over groups of children; good physical condition, and a dependable attendance record.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Some experience in driving an automobile; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Possession of a valid operator's license(s) to drive a school bus. Ability to meet special training and qualifications as set forth by the employer and appropriate agencies.

## AUTOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE FOREMAN I

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Supervises and takes the lead in the repair and maintenance activities of a garage; does related work as required. This is highly skilled journeyman automotive mechanic work distinguished from the class of Automotive Mechanics I and II by the responsibility for planning, assigning and supervising the work of Automotive Mechanics, Apprentices, Trades Helpers, Automotive Machinists and other personnel as assigned.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Assigns, supervises, instructs, sublets and performs preventive maintenance and repairs on school buses and automotive equipment.

—Directs and inspects the work of Automotive Mechanics, Garagemen, Automotive Machinists, Apprentices and Trades Helpers.

—Recommends tools and replacement equipment to be used by the school system.

—Determines and supervises repairs to equipment.

—Supervises parts room personnel and the requisitioning of parts.

—Repairs electrical components of various vehicles.

—Maintains files and prepares reports.

—Directs a preventive maintenance program for vehicles.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Working knowledge of the standard practices and tools of the automotive mechanic trade; working knowledge of the principles of operation of gasoline engines; thorough knowledge of the occupational hazards and safety precautions of the trade; working knowledge of business practices applicable to garage management; ability to plan and supervise the work of journeyman automotive mechanics; ability to get along well with others; good judgment; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Considerable increasingly responsible experience at the level of an Automotive Mechanic II including some background in a supervisory capacity at a large garage or service station, and completion of ninth grade, with attendance at a vocational or trade school highly desirable, supplemented by completion of a recognized apprenticeship in the trade; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## AUTOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE FOREMAN II

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Administers and supervises school maintenance garage activities and operations; does related work as required.

This is a responsible administrative and supervisory position involving accountability for all activities and operations of the school maintenance garages. The work is performed within the general guidelines set by the Director/Supervisor of Transportation with leeway granted for the exercise of independent judgment. Supervision is exercised over all garage personnel, and is distinguished from that of Automotive Mechanic Foreman I by the responsibility for all garages and repairs.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Plans and administers the activities and operations of the school maintenance garages.

– Establishes and maintains schedules for preventive maintenance.

– Gives technical advice and assistance to Automotive Mechanics and Automotive Mechanic Foremen I on difficult or complex jobs.

– Decides need and feasibility of major repairs on individual pieces of equipment.

– Negotiates with commercial garages for the repair of equipment beyond the capabilities of the school maintenance garage.

—Recommends specifications for purchases of new automotive and shop equipment and supplies.

—Prepares garage budget estimates and other regular and special reports.

—Supervises maintenance of cost and other records.

—Dispatches service trucks to disabled vehicles.

—Maintains a log book and work sheet file on each vehicle.

—Requisitions parts for storeroom and other supplies as needed.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Comprehensive knowledge of the standard practices and tools of the automotive mechanic trade; working knowledge of business practices applicable to garage management; ability to develop and administer a long-range preventive maintenance program; ability to plan and supervise the work of journeyman automotive mechanics; ability to get along well with others; good administrative judgment; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Extensive experience as an automotive mechanic, including some experience in a supervisory capacity at the level of Automotive Mechanic Foreman I and completion of the ninth grade, with attendanee at a vocational or trade school highly desirable; or any equivalent combination of

experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

# AUTOMOTIVE MECHANIC I

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Performs skilled work of the journeyman level in the repair and maintenance of a variety of school vehicles; does related work as required.

Employees in this class perform highly skilled tasks in mechanical repair and maintenance of automobiles, trucks and buses. Employees work under general supervision, using independent judgment as to the method of repair after receiving oral instructions or written work orders as to the nature of the job. Supervision may be exercised over an Apprentice or Trades Helper.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Does general repair work on vehicles.

– Replaces and/or repairs valves, pistons and main bearings and assembles cooling, fuel and exhaust systems.

– Inspects, adjusts, repairs and overhauls brakes, ignition systems, differentials and rear axle assemblies.

– Tunes motors using standardized testing equipment.

– Responds to emergency road calls from disabled equipment and makes minor adjustments or has the vehicle towed to the maintenance garage.

– Trains and supervises Apprentices and Trades Helpers.

– Installs dual brake kits on driver training cars.

—Keeps work area cleaned and painted.

—May perform a variety of welding jobs.

—Makes repairs to power lawn mowers, cement mixers, chain saws, snow blowers and power takeoff units when assigned to the Maintenance Department.

—Overhauls engines and equipment on power mowers, riding mowers, and other engines in the Maintenance Department.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Working knowledge of the standard practices and tools of the automotive mechanic trade; working knowledge of the principles of operation of gasoline engines; working knowledge of the occupational hazards and safety precautions of the trade; ability to understand and carry out complex oral and written instructions; ability to adapt available tools and repair parts to specific repair problems; skill in the use and care of hand and machine tools employed in motor repair and adjustment work; skill in adjusting defects in automotive equipment; mechanical aptitude; skill in using electronic diagnostic equipment; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Some experience as a journeyman automotive mechanic and completion of the ninth grade, supplemented by completion of a recognized apprenticeship in the trade; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

# AUTOMOTIVE MECHANIC II

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Performs skilled work of the journeyman and supervisory level in the repair and maintenance of a variety of school vehicles; does related work as required.

Employees in this class perform highly skilled tasks in mechanical repair and maintenance of automobiles, trucks and buses. The class of Automotive Mechanic II is equivalent to the class of Automotive Mechanic I, but is distinguished from that class by the supervisory duties performed as a crew foreman. Employees work under the supervision of the Automotive Mechanic Foreman I or II, using independent judgment as to the method of repair after receiving oral instructions or written work orders as to the nature of the job. Supervision is exercised over Automotive Mechanics I, Apprentices and Trades Helpers.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Does general repair work on school vehicles.

– Replaces and/or repairs valves, pistons and main bearings and assembles cooling, fuel and exhaust systems.

– Inspects, adjusts, repairs and overhauls brakes, ignition systems, differentials and rear axle assemblies.

– Tunes motors using standardized testing equipment.

– Responds to emergency road calls from disabled equipment and makes minor adjustments or has the vehicle towed to the maintenance garage.

—Trains and/or supervises Automotive Mechanics I, Apprentices and Trades Helpers.

—Installs dual brake kits on driver training cars.

—Keeps work area cleaned and painted.

—May perform a variety of welding jobs.

—Makes repairs to power lawn mowers, cement mixers, chain saws, snow blowers and power takeoff units when assigned to the Maintenance Department.

—Overhauls engines and equipment on power mowers, riding mowers and other engines in the Maintenance Department.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Working knowledge of the standard practices and tools of the automotive mechanic trade; working knowledge of the principles of operation of gasoline engines; working knowledge of the occupational hazards and safety precautions of the trade; ability to understand and carry out complex oral and written instructions; ability to adapt available tools and repair parts to specific repair problems; skill in the use and care of hand and machine tools employed in motor repair and adjustment work; skills in adjusting defects in automotive equipment; mechanical aptitude; skills in using electronic diagnostic equipment; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Considerable experience as a journeyman automotive mechanic and completion of the ninth grade, supplemented by completion of a recognized apprenticeship in the trade; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

# AUTOMOTIVE MACHINIST

## GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Operates a variety of metalworking machines in order to repair automotive engines and parts; does related work as required.

This is skilled work in the performance of the full range of difficult mechanical operations. The Automotive Machinist works under the supervision of an Automotive Mechanic Foreman I or II who gives specific assignments, but the machine work is performed with little instruction or supervision. This class is distinguished from that of Automotive Mechanic I by the skills involved in machining parts within close tolerances and the operation of equipment not normally operated by an Automotive Mechanic.

## EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Makes parts and tools reinforcement plates, shafts and collars by cutting and shaping iron, steel, brass, copper or any alloys of metals with machine shop equipment, using blueprints, drawings, rough sketches, or broken parts as a basis.

– Operates machine shop equipment, including lathes, milling machines, shapers, planers, grinders, drill presses, radial drills, boring bars, key seaters and other metalworking machines to make and repair metal parts.

– Fits parts to equipment and makes adjustments.

– Tears down and rebuilds engines, boring cylinder

walls, milling heads, turning down shafts and grinding and reseating or replacing valves.

—Occasionally does hand forging and heat treating of metal parts.

—Tears down and assembles various types of heavy automotive or construction equipment.

—Does acetylene and arc-welding.

—Does general repair work.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Thorough knowledge of machine work and related mechanical trades operations; good knowledge of standard practices, methods, tools and materials of the mechanical trades; good knowledge of the occupational hazards connected with general maintenance operations and ability to both observe and enforce appropriate safety precautions; ability to work from sketches or blueprints to close tolerances and to understand and carry out oral and written instructions; ability to operate machinist equipment; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Considerable experience in machining automotive parts and completion of the ninth grade or vocational school course supplemented by completion of a recognized apprenticeship in the trade; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## GARAGEMAN

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Performs routine tasks in servicing and maintaining school buses and other motor equipment; does related work as required.

This is routine manual work performed under the supervision of a Foreman or Mechanic who assigns work to be done and spot checks work on completion. Employees in this class perform preventive maintenance work on school buses and other motor equipment.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Operates gas pump to fill vehicles with gas.

– Checks oil, tires, etc. to make sure vehicles are ready for operation.

– Moves vehicles as necessary.

– Warms up vehicles for drivers.

– Reports flat tires and any obvious mechanical malfunctions to mechanic.

– Keeps records of vehicles serviced and materials used.

– Orders gas, oil, and other supplies as needed.

– Locks and unlocks gates.

– May perform a variety of other assignments such as parts pickup and delivery, tire repair, greasing vehicles, assisting mechanics in repair work, and janitorial duties.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Some knowledge of simple automotive maintenance practices; ability to use such tools as grease guns, jacks and battery testing equipment; ability to understand and carry out simple oral and written instructions; dependability; mechanical aptitude; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Preferably some experience as a helper in a garage or automotive service station, and completion of the eighth grade; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## LUBRICATION SPECIALIST I

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Assists in servicing and checking buses and other vehicles at parking locations; does related work as required.

Employees in this class are assigned to a mobile maintenance unit which is moved to various parking lots incident to servicing and performing preventive maintenance checks on buses and other vehicles. Employees perform work of a mechanical nature which involves lifting and moving of heavy objects. Work is performed under general supervision.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Operates grease gun in lubricating automotive equipment.

—Checks rear end, transmission, master brake cylinder, power steering and battery and adds fluids as necessary to maintain proper levels.

—Changes oil and oil filter and starts equipment to check for oil leakage.

—Assists in making an overall check of equipment for defects such as faulty wheel cylinders, emergency brake, loose shock absorbers or springs, and fluid leaks.

—Replenishes supply of lubricants, fluids and materials on maintenance trucks as required.

—Drives truck to locations where equipment is to be serviced.

– Assists in maintaining records of vehicles serviced and materials used.

– May perform a variety of other assignments during inclement weather such as parts pick up and delivery, tire repair work, assisting mechanics in repair work, and janitorial duties.

– Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Some knowledge of the types, grades and uses of standard automotive lubricants and fluids; working knowledge of standard methods, tools, equipment, hazards and safety practices involved in servicing automotive equipment; ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions; mechanical aptitude; good physical condition; must possess a valid Motor Vehicle Operator's license.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Preferably completion of the eighth grade and some experience as a helper in a garage or automotive service station; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## LUBRICATION SPECIALIST II

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Services and checks school buses and other vehicles at parking locations; does related work as required.

Employees in this class are in charge of a mobile maintenance unit and are responsible for servicing buses and other vehicles on location. Responsibility also is involved for making preventive maintenance checks on the vehicles, and for keeping appropriate records. Direction is received from an employee of higher salary level.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Oversees and participates in lubricating and checking vehicles.

—Operates grease gun.

—Checks rear end, transmission, master brake cylinder, power steering and battery and adds fluids as necessary to maintain proper levels.

—Changes oil and oil filter and starts equipment to check for oil leakage.

—Makes an overall check of equipment for defects such as faulty wheel cylinders, emergency brake, loose shock absorbers or springs, and fluid leaks; reports any defective conditions to mechanic.

—Sees that there is an adequate supply of lubricants, fluids and materials on maintenance truck.

—Drives truck to locations where equipment is to be serviced.

– Maintains records of vehicles serviced and materials used.

– May perform a variety of other assignments during inclement weather.

– Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Good knowledge of the types, grades and uses of standard automotive lubricants and fluids; good knowledge of standard methods, tools, equipment, hazards and safety practices involved in servicing automotive equipment; ability to understand and follow oral and written instructions; ability to maintain records; mechanical aptitude; good physical condition; must possess a valid Motor Vehicle Operator's license.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Preferably completion of the eighth grade and considerable experience at the level of work involved in Lubrication Specialist I; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## TIRE SPECIALIST I

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Assists in maintaining the tires on school buses and other vehicles at parking locations; does related work as required.

An employee in this class is assigned to a mobile unit covering the maintenance of tires on buses, trucks and miscellaneous other equipment at vehicle parking areas. Also performs emergency road service on tires. Work is arduous in nature and involves lifting and moving of heavy objects. General supervision is received from an employee of higher salary level.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Assists in inspecting tires on vehicles for evidence of wear, damage, or underinflation.

—Inflates or dismounts and replaces tires as necessary.

—Properly matches tires when dual wheels are involved.

—Repairs flats.

—Performs static balancing of wheels and tires.

—Makes road service calls to change tires.

—Uses such tools and equipment as air compressor and air wrench, jacks, tire irons, safety chains, tire hammers, and tire lubricants.

– Drives truck to locations where work is to be done, and to pick up or deliver tires as necessary.

– Cleans and replaces tools and equipment.

– Loads and unloads tires.

– Assists in maintaining records of vehicles serviced and materials used.

– May perform a variety of other assignments during inclement weather.

– Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Some knowledge of tire sizes in relation to vehicle capacity, and of state inspection laws as they apply to the condition of tires on motor vehicles; working knowledge of standard methods, tools, equipment, hazards and safety practices involved in tire maintenance activities; ability to recognize recaps from new tires; ability to follow oral and written instructions; ability to properly care for compressed air equipment; good physical condition; must possess a valid Motor Vehicle Operator's license.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Preferably completion of the eighth grade and some experience as a helper in a garage or automotive service station; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## TIRE SPECIALIST II

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Maintains tires on school buses and other vehicles at parking locations; does related work as required.

An employee in this class is in charge of a mobile unit covering the maintenance of tires on buses, trucks and miscellaneous other equipment at vehicle parking areas. Also performs emergency road services on tires. Work is arduous in nature and involves lifting and moving of heavy objects. Direction is received from an employee of higher salary level.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Maintains an adequate stock of tires, oversees and participates in the work.

—Inspects tires on vehicles for evidence of wear, damage or underinflation.

—Inflates or dismounts and replaces tires as necessary.

—Properly matches tires when dual wheels are involved.

—Repairs flats.

—Performs static balancing of wheels and tires.

—Makes road service calls to change tires.

—Uses such tools and equipment as air compressor and air wrench, jacks, tire irons, safety chains, tire hammers, and tire lubricants.

– Drives truck to locations where work is to be done, and to pick up or deliver tires as necessary.

– Cleans and replaces tools and equipment.

– Loads and unloads tires.

– Maintains records of vehicles serviced and materials used.

– May perform a variety of other assignments during inclement weather.

– Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Good knowledge of tire sizes in relation to vehicle capacity, and of state inspection laws as they apply to the condition of tires on motor vehicles; good knowledge of standard methods, tools, equipment, hazards and safety practices involved in tire maintenance activities; ability to recognize recaps from new tires; ability to follow oral and written instructions; ability to properly care for compressed air equipment; good physical condition; must possess a valid Motor Vehicle Operator's license.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Preferably completion of the eighth grade and some experience as a helper in a garage or automotive service station; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## TRADES APPRENTICE

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Participates in a comprehensive program of instruction and on-the-job training over a specified time period leading to a journeyman skill in a specific trade; does related work as required.

Employees in this class are in training for a journeyman level in a specific trade. Many of the duties performed are similar to those performed by a Trades Helper. However, a Trades Apprentice is distinguished from a Trades Helper in the formal instructional training he receives and graduation at the completion of training to a journeyman class. An employee in this class works under the direct supervision of a journeyman.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

– Assists journeyman in repair, maintenance and installation of parts, fixtures, systems motors or equipment in a specific trade area.

– Performs limited work of a journeyman in troubleshooting and repair.

– Carries various materials, tools and equipment used in the trade and runs errands.

– May on occasion drive a truck or act as a relief driver.

– Attends formal instruction in work-related subjects such as mathematics, blueprint reading and theory of the trade.

—Cleans up after work is completed.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Some knowledge of the basic fundamentals of the trade in which training is received; some knowledge of the common practices, processes, materials and tools used in a trade; ability and willingness to learn; mechanical aptitude; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Some experience in the appropriate trade and graduation from a standard high school course; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## TRADES HELPER

### GENERAL STATEMENT OF DUTIES

Performs semiskilled and routine tasks as a helper to a journeyman tradesman; does related work as required.

The work of this class is of a routine semiskilled nature involving responsibility for willing and efficient performance of assigned tasks. An employee in this class works under the supervision of a journeyman tradesman who assigns work to be done. A Trades Helper is expected to perform tasks of progressively increasing difficulty. The work is carefully checked in process and upon completion.

### EXAMPLES OF WORK

—Carries materials, tools and supplies for journeyman tradesman.

—Performs trades tasks of the journeyman level on occasion.

—Assists Automotive Mechanics in the maintenance and repair of school buses, trucks and other automotive equipment.

—Changes tires and batteries and replaces minor parts.

—Does minor tune-ups and related repairs as directed.

—Cleans up after work is completed.

—Assists in other maintenance operations.

—Other duties as assigned.

## REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

Some familiarity with common practices, processes, materials and tools of one of the skilled trades; mechanical aptitude; interest in and willingness to learn a trade; good physical condition.

## ACCEPTABLE EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

Preferably some experience as a helper to a skilled tradesman and completion of a standard trade or high school course; or any equivalent combination of experience and training which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Anthony R. Miller gives new definition to the word "professional" in pupil transportation. His work in both the public and private sectors, and his educational background make him a leader among his peers.

In addition to managing large school bus fleets, he has taught college courses in the field of pupil transportation, and served as consultant to school district personnel and contractors across the United States.

While many of us think of becoming an author, Mr. Miller gave action to his thoughts, and the result is a book that will be a valuable resource to both novice and seasoned pupil transportation directors.

# NOTES

**A BOOK WRITTEN FOR TRANSPORTATION DIRECTORS, BUSINESS MANAGERS AND CONTRACTORS.**

School Bus Management is unique, and this book helps school board members, superintendents, and business directors understand what it takes to be a successful transportation director.

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West Palm Beach Schools, Florida.

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Geoff Davies, President
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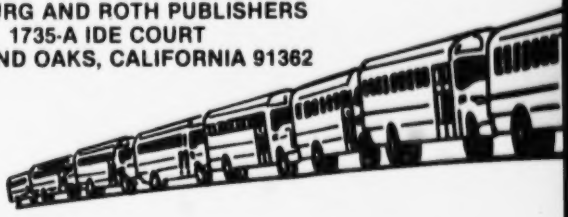

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

**ANTHONY R. MILLER** directed a 900 school bus fleet, managed 1,200 bus drivers and 250 mechanics, and since 1979, has served as a consultant to school districts and contractors all across the United States and Canada.

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